

Dudley CHRONICLE



Thursday, March 29, 2018

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Government cash boost as winter takes its toll on roads **£330k MORE TO TACKLE POTHOLES**

Report by Fiona Smith

DUDLEY Council has been given £330,000 to tackle potholes on the borough's crumbling roads after the harsh winter weather has taken its toll.

In total an extra £3 million has been given to councils in the Black Country and Staffordshire by the Department for Transport.

Staffordshire has been given £2.2m, Dudley £330,000, Sandwell £310,000, Walsall £260,000 and Wolverhampton £240,000. Nearby Birmingham was not given any money.

The cash is on top of £75m in Government funding already given to councils this year, as well as a £46m boost for highways authorities announced just before Christmas. At that time Dudley was given £149,975 to help tackle some 2,773 potholes.

Announcing the latest windfall, Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said: "We have seen an unusually prolonged spell of freezing weather which has caused damage to our local roads. We are giving councils even more funding to help repair their roads so all road users can enjoy their journeys without having to dodge potholes."

Data

Transport for the West Midlands has also been awarded £1.7m of funding for 'road condition monitoring innovations' to help councils 'more efficiently manage and plan maintenance works'.

The idea is to help provide councils with data to enable them to repair potholes before they materialise, helping prevent further potholes and other road defects occurring over time.

Dudley's cabinet member for planning and economic development Councillor Ian Kettle said: "We are coming to the back end of winter and it has done a tremendous amount of damage to our roads."

"The quality of our road surfaces no longer stands up to the pounding they take from cars. I think any help to fill in potholes is only a temporary respite. We need to seriously look at the calibre and quality of our road surfaces."

● £100m damage – page 4

MAYOR IN THE SADDLE FOR BIG RIDE-OUT SUCCESS



On your bike Mr Mayor – Councillor Dave Tyler, centre, starts the motorcycle ride from Himley Hall to raise money for the charity Mind

HUNDREDS of bikers revved up for the first charity ride-out from Himley Hall in aid of mental health charity Mind.

Around 200 motorcycles were at the event and included one biker making a return to the saddle after some years, Mayor of Dudley Councillor Dave Tyler.

The total amount raised is yet to be added up but it is thought to be in the region of £2,000.

Taking place on Sunday, the bikers – featuring bike club members from the Black Country, Birmingham and Shropshire – rode out from Himley Hall at 10am for a 19.7-mile circuit of the borough.

The ride was organised by Councillor Tyler and campaigner Damian Corfield.

Mr Corfield said: "We were overjoyed with how it went and really taken back – especially considering it's the first event."

"The people who supported us were great and we've managed to raise about £2,000, which is going to Dudley Mind. We've even had motorcycle clubs from Telford, Birmingham and Perry Barr come and join – there was a big turnout."

It took about six months to organise the event and organisers hope to turn it into an annual fixture.

For details see dudleymind.org.uk website.

CRIME

Masked robbers in armed raid on store

THREE masked raiders burst into a Spar shop in Dudley wielding a crowbar and wooden bat in a terrifying robbery.

The gang targeted the Spar in Russells Hall Road, jumping over the counter and forcing the till open, and then fled the scene with cash.

Police are investigating the incident, which happened just after 10.30pm on Sunday.

Anyone with information is asked to call police on 101 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800555111.

HEALTH

Patient checks after op theatre air issue

PATIENTS are being monitored for infection after undergoing operations while theatre airflow was below recommended levels.

The laminar airflow in three theatres at Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley faced problems resulting in 32 operations being cancelled. Patients who were operated on are being monitored, a spokesman for Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust said.

COUNCIL

Green belt off limits for new housing

GREEN belt land around Dudley has been put off limits to developers.

The hunt for potential housing sites in the countryside surrounding the borough has been called off by Dudley Council chiefs. The authority will turn its attention to brownfield sites instead, including former industrial land.

Council leader Patrick Harley said green belt land would only be considered if absolutely necessary and with 'extreme concern'.

INSIDE

WHICH WITCH IS BOSS IN OZ?



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Here we snow again for a white Easter?



Dudley's snowy Easter in 2013

THE clocks may have signalled the beginning of British Summer Time but a bleak Easter weekend is forecast with snow on the way for some.

We should not be surprised at the prospect of a white Easter. It was only at the end of March 2013, when Easter fell on the same weekend, that we last saw a white blanket cover the area. Records showed 2013 was the second coldest March in 100 years.

The mean temperature was 2.2C (36F) more than 3C colder than the long-term monthly average. It equalled the average temperature in March 1947

with only March 1962 colder at 1.9C (35F). In the Black Country and Staffordshire temperatures plunged to as low as minus 12.5C (9F), and the snow caused Easter events across the county to be cancelled.

Dudley Market traders were unhappy about the amount of snow around the market stalls which they said was forcing some traders to go home. Many main streets as well as side roads were left covered by snow. There were postcard views at beauty spots across the area.

From late March to early April in 2013 the country suffered a prolonged

spell of freezing temperatures with winds bringing in bitterly cold air from northern Europe and Siberia, just as the UK has experienced so far this year with the 'Beast from the East'.

Up to 20cm of snow fell, especially on higher ground, and there was significant drifting caused by the strong easterly wind. The snow remained on the ground until early April.

This time the region looks set to escape the worst of the weather but we can expect unsettled conditions, blustery and wet days with an unsettled holiday weekend.

Call to protect iconic '30s carved police doors

THE front doors of Dudley's central police station feature unique carvings showcasing different police-related scenes.

They form part of the classic period design of the 1939 building which closed down to the public last year.

Carvings include an officer on a motorbike, another on a horse and one on with a telephone. The future of the building is uncertain after closures of other stations in the West Midlands and calls have been made to preserve the doors if anything happened to the building.

A Twitter account run by West Midlands Police, @WMPHistory, tweeted: "I challenge anyone to show me a better set of #police station doors in the WORLD. Whilst not open to the public the station is still in use although sadly funding cuts mean it will be sold soon"

Russ Hall, a Marine Special Constable, replied: "I hope the doors will be preserved in some way."

@WMPHistory tweeted: "It is in a conservation area, which means that Dudley Council can put measures in place to retain the doors, or if a new owner wanted to undertake building works then they could mandate that the doors must come to our police museum for preservation."

Archives

The station on New Street closed to the public last year but is still used by West Midlands Police.

Dudley Council leader Patrick Harley said either the Dudley Archives Centre or the Black Country Living Museum would be an ideal home for the doors if the future of the building is uncertain. He said: "If the doors could move to the archives or museum I would support that. I think it is a shame the station is closing when so much money has been spent investing in offices in Birmingham."

The Conservative councillor added: "David Jamieson (West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner) spent £33 million to have posh offices while he closed other offices in the area."

The iconic building is in 1930s style with a curved entrance and two statues of officers above the door.



PCSO Nick Hayes and Dalraj Chhoker from the Dudley Central Police Team in front of the doors



PCSO Dalraj Chhoker with a carved door panel



One of the door carvings, police officer on a motorbike

Daughter's call to stop youngsters heading ball

THE daughter of West Bromwich Albion legend Jeff Astle has backed calls for a ban on footballers under the age of 10 heading the ball.

Dawn Astle wants to see stricter controls to protect young players from possible risks to their health after such rules were introduced for children's soccer in America.

Albion legend Jeff died in 2002 and became the first British footballer confirmed to have died from chronic traumatic encephalopathy, a brain disease found in people with a history of head injury. It was believed to have been caused from repeatedly heading footballs.

Dawn said: "I think there's got to be more research into it. But if experts are saying children are at risk you should err on the side of caution."

"I don't think they're going to miss anything from the game. It probably will improve their football by keeping the ball on the floor."

Her comments come after Kevin Payne, the chief executive of US Club Soccer, recently said it was only a matter of time before the rest of the world catches up with the United States' pioneering ban on under-10s heading footballs introduced in 2015.

Council leader insists site is safe

DUDLEY Council leader Patrick Harley insists that land proposed for a travellers site in the borough is safe.

Plans submitted for a transit camp in Budden Road, Coseley, are now open for people to have their say. Coseley residents have vowed to conduct a contamination check of their own on the site, which they claim is unsafe for use by traveller families.

Councillor Harley said: "We have reassured them on a number of occasions that the site has been made safe. We would be more than happy to share relevant reports regarding contamination with residents if requested. We would be uncomfortable with allowing intrusive investigations by third parties without firm reassurance the site would be restored to its original condition."

Joining the chorus for Good Friday

SINGERS are invited to take part in a choral work, a performance of Stainer's Crucifixion on Good Friday. The oratorio is being performed at St Thomas's Church in Stourbridge at 6pm. It's £5 to join the rehearsal, from 3.15pm. Tickets to watch the final performance are £7.

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Boss backs closure of eight police buildings

PLANS to shut eight police stations across the Black Country – including Sedgley’s – have been backed by West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson, who has signed off on the scheme.

It was put forward by the region’s Chief Constable Dave Thompson and will see 24 buildings in total go across the West Midlands to save £5m.

Mr Jamieson said closures were necessary to save money for the cash-strapped force and insisted officers would remain a presence in communities. He said: “Closing a building does not equate to closing down policing.”

The scheme will now go out to a full public consultation for each site.

First set to go will be Prouds Lane in Bilston, due to close in the summer. Sedgley police station is next in summer 2019, and stations in Oldbury, Aldridge, Tipton and Wednesfield will be gone by the middle of 2020. Smethwick police station will close in summer 2021, then Wednesbury the following year.

Mr Jamieson said it was right to close ‘tired old buildings’ to protect officer numbers. Mr Thompson said that neighbourhood policing teams would stay in the communities they serve and alternative premises would be found. But Sedgley’s Councillor Bill Etheridge is angry over the move, saying lack of investment is reflected in rising crime figures.

Motorcyclist dies after taxi collision

A MOTORCYCLIST died in hospital after being involved in a collision with a taxi in Tipton.

West Midlands Police said the rider had failed to stop for officers before colliding with the taxi at the junction of Horseley Heath and Lower Church Lane on Friday at around 9.40pm.

The 26-year-old motorcyclist, who has not been formally identified, was taken to hospital in a critical condition and died on Saturday.

Whether the bike rider was being chased by police at the time of impact is not yet clear. The incident has been referred to the Independent Office for Police Conduct as is standard practice when somebody dies or is seriously injured after coming into contact with the police.

1,000 cars roll up

MIDLANDS’ Motorfest will return to the region this weekend with up to one thousand cars spanning a century of motoring. It is back at Weston Park on the Staffordshire-Shropshire border on Easter Sunday.

Yellow lines for road accident blackspot

AN ACCIDENT blackspot near Dudley is to get double yellow lines in a drive to cut the number of crashes.

Wodehouse Lane at Gospel End, near Sedgley, will see yellow lines painted outside The Firs Care Home. Neighbours say there have been issues with parking there and believe it is linked to a high number of crashes.

Staffordshire County Council chiefs have said the work to bring in road safety measures on the trouble-stretch will begin this week.

Councillor Victoria Wilson, who wrote to residents to let them know about the work, said: “We managed to arrange a consultation and had no objections. The local residents are really pleased.

“We are going to be putting double yellow lines outside of the nursing home. As long as people take notice of these yellow lines there won’t be any cars parked there any more.

“If vehicles are going around the corner at speed and they have to pull out onto the other side of the road, if that is no longer an issue then surely that would cut down accidents.”

Bosses at the home say the move will help curb the number of accidents – and have called for traffic lights to also be brought in.

Assistant manager of The Firs Care Home, Chris Smith-Law, 32, said: “Obviously it is about time that things are done because of all the accidents outside the home.

“I remember two lads in a car that was upside down and the roof was crushed and they had to be pulled out of the car.

“It is a bad bend. There should be traffic lights. But I think the lines will help because of the parking. It can be quite difficult for staff coming on and off the car park as we can not see around that bend. I do personally feel that there should be traffic lights as well to minimise the number of accidents.”

Nearby residents had described Wodehouse Lane as a ‘racetrack’.

Speaking at the end of last year, Jane Kitchen, who has lived in Gospel End for 17 years, said: “There needs to be something done to slow the speed of traffic.”

Board will not accept work ‘done by teacher’

ART students have been told they cannot submit their coursework amid claims that a teacher had done some of the work for them.

A leaked email, seen by The Chronicle’s sister newspaper the Express & Star, says a teacher at Summerhill School in King-swinford ‘stepped beyond the boundaries’ by completing some GCSE coursework.

It now means that the art students cannot submit the work that they have completed over an 18-month period. They are now being offered additional sessions over the next six weeks to complete new coursework after the exam board ruled that their current work would not be accepted.

Dudley Council refused to say if the teacher involved had been suspended.

But an email by Deanne Fishbourne, a senior manager at the council’s people directorate, said that in a meeting between the school and year 11 pupils it ‘became clear’ that the teacher had ‘stepped beyond the boundaries’ and ‘done some of the pupils’ art coursework for them.

Headteacher James Bowkett said: “Understandably this is extremely upsetting for those pupils affected, who have worked so hard for the past 18 months, and we are extremely sorry this has happened.

Support

“Unfortunately, following a school investigation, it was found there may have been irregularities in how some of the GCSE coursework had been created. The exam board has since indicated it will not accept the submission of any of the class’s coursework towards the final grade. We will be doing all we can to support them.”

Councillor Paul Brothwood, leader of the Dudley UKIP Group, said the issue was raised by students, prompting the school to carry out an investigation. He has now calling for a public meeting over the matter, so parents could express their concerns.

Councillor Brothwood also claimed the teacher in question had been suspended but this has not been confirmed.

Police chase ends with car crash



The car left at an angle after the vehicle had crashed through fence into a Brierley Hill ditch

A CAR crashed through a fence and into a ditch in Brierley Hill last Thursday night, at around 10pm.

Brierley Hill Police Neighbourhood Team tweeted about the incident: “Brierley Hill NHT 1 on the trail of a vehicle offender spotted

Brierley Hill Police last Thursday night, at around 10pm.

Brierley Hill Police Neighbourhood Team tweeted about the incident: “Brierley Hill NHT 1 on the trail of a vehicle offender spotted

in Brierley Hill and vehicle found crashed a short while later.”

A photograph taken from the scene showed that the car had crashed through a wooden fence and come to rest among some tree

NEWS IN BRIEF

Sharpe honoured as Duncan patron

FORMER Manchester United and England footballer Lee Sharpe is to become patron of The Duncan Edwards Foundation.

The Halesowen-born pundit said he would be honoured to join the foundation in memory of the Dudley-born former Busby Babe, to help keep his legend alive and help young people in Dudley with sports training. Sharpe was invited to take on the role by Rose Cook-Monk, who officially launched the foundation last month on the 60th anniversary of Edwards’ death.

A popular exhibition in Duncan’s honour at Dudley Archives in Tipton Road has been extended to April 28.

239 jobs are axed at Carillion’s HQ

MORE than half the 460-strong workforce at Carillion’s Wolverhampton headquarters have lost their jobs so far.

In just over 10 weeks since the construction and services giant crashed into liquidation, 239 of the people working at the Salop Street offices have been made redundant. Of the 221 left, most are working in so-called ‘back office’ administration roles. They are working with the special managers of the liquidation accountants PwC, who were drafted in by the Official Receiver.

Society praises dementia work

DUDLEY has been recognised by the Alzheimer’s Society for strides it has made towards becoming a ‘dementia friendly community’.

It comes after Dudley Council helped set up the Dudley Dementia Action Alliance two years ago in a bid to improve care and support for people living with dementia and their carers.

The alliance brings together key stakeholders within the borough and people living with dementia.

It has developed an action plan to help people with dementia and their carers.

Get cracking with egg hunt at Rock Houses

FAMILIES are being invited to take part in a cracking Easter weekend. The National Trust have teamed up with Cadbury’s to offer families a nature-themed trail, exploring the woodland walks of Kinver Edge with a fun chocolate egg hunt. Visitors can also look around the unique Rock Houses and grab a slice of cake and a cuppa in the tea rooms. The trail is from tomorrow (Friday) to Easter Monday from 11am to 3pm, £3 charge per prize.

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COUNTY NEWS

Landlords put off by stamp fee bid

THE change in stamp duty has put the majority of landlords off investing in further rental property, according to the Residential Landlords Association.

It says the additional three per cent on buy-to-let homes has seen 69 per cent of landlords deterred from fresh investment.

Jonathon Ivory, managing director of Atlas Residential, said: "Just as the UK needs more rental homes than ever before, the stamp duty change has significantly dented investors' interest in providing those homes.

"Thankfully, the build-to-rent sector is growing rapidly."

Redrow urges pay hike for trainees

HOUSEBUILDER Redrow in the Midlands is calling for higher wages for apprentices and a complete rethink in the way they are taught English and maths.

The firm wants increased apprentice pay rates, saying that low wages are putting young people off schemes. In addition, Redrow's new report Building Better Apprenticeships found that one in 10 parents in the Midlands say loss of family benefits when their child starts is a problem.

Also, maths and English tuition as part of an apprenticeship is "not fit for purpose" says Redrow, and is too theoretical according to education experts.

Cheers! As firms brew up bronze

BREWERIES in Brownhills, Bewdley and Stone took bronze medals at an awards. Judging took place at the Beer X event in Liverpool.

Backyard Brewhouse, Brownhills, was third in the cask premium bitter and pale ale category with its 4.45 per cent Gold. Bewdley Brewery took bronze with 3.6 per cent Worcestershire Way in the keg category and Stone's Limestone Brewery did the same with Cherry Stone, a 5.2 per cent beer, in the small pack section.

Call first, message to people with bugs

THE West Midlands branch of Public Health England is urging people to support their local NHS by calling before visiting health services if they are ill with a stomach bug.

The request comes after significantly higher levels of stomach bugs, including norovirus, have been recorded in the region. Dr Helen Carter said: "People feeling unwell can call their GP or NHS111 for advice."

Potholes cause drivers £100m damage

DAMAGE caused by potholes has cost drivers in the West Midlands more than £100 million this past year, with recent cold weather only making the problem worse.

Only drivers in London and the South West had to fork out more than those in the West Midlands, with London being hit the hardest with a damage cost of about £170m.

Drivers in Wales only had to pay about £25m, the lowest out of all 11 UK regions studied.

A study led by vehicle repair com-

pany Kwik Fit found that during the last year, potholes had caused damage to vehicles costing a total of £915 million to repair across the nation.

This is an increase of 34 per cent on the figure of £684m two years ago.

Impacts

Communications director at Kwik Fit Roger Griggs said the poor condition of the roads was hitting motorists' wallets ever harder.

He said: "Unfortunately, experience of past years has shown us that the re-

cent cold weather will only make the problem worse and we are likely to see even more drivers suffering serious damage from impacts with potholes.

"It's important to note that while sometimes a pothole will cause a blow out to a tyre, in many cases the damage is not immediately obvious.

"Often a pothole can cause a slow puncture, bulge on the inside tyre wall or hairline crack in the wheel rim which only becomes evident days after the impact."

About 70 per cent of drivers said

they had hit at least one pothole a week during the last 12 months, with a quarter hitting one every single day.

Nearly nine in ten drivers said road or weather conditions led to them hitting a pothole, such as it being hidden by a puddle or it being dark. Some aid they had to make a snap decision to hit the hole as avoiding it could have led to a collision.

Dudley Council is spending more than half a million pounds on repairs required after sub-zero temperatures damaged roads in the borough.

20 jobs as firm wins £25m order from Bahrain

A FURNACE manufacturer has created 20 jobs after securing a new £25 million order from Bahrain.

Mechatherm International in King-swinford was supported by the Department for International Trade in winning the work

It specialises in the design, manufacture, installation and maintenance of bespoke furnaces used to produce aluminium.

The new contract is to supply and maintain a series of furnaces with one of the largest aluminium producers in the Middle East.

Mechatherm has increased the size of its workforce from 50 to 70 to meet the increased demand and expects revenue to rise above £20 million in 2019 as a result of the order from the Middle East.

The company, which is based at Hampshire House, High Street, has a customer base of blue chip companies and sells to more than 50 countries globally, with exports accounting for around 85 per cent of its annual turnover.

Mechatherm also intends to open its first office in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates later this year to bolster its growing presence in the region.

Mechatherm's ongoing success overseas is being celebrated by the DIT's Exporting is Great campaign, which showcases more than 30 businesses from a range of sectors and regions to inspire and support exports.

Andrew Riley, chairman of Mechatherm International, said: "Exporting is key to our business and some of our most valuable contracts are with overseas customers."

Thousands of free trees on the way

THOUSANDS of trees are being planted across the Black Country.

The delivery by the Woodland Trust, which was delayed because of the recent snow, is part of a UK-wide initiative which has seen five million trees sent to schools and four million to community groups since the scheme was launched.

A total of 27,330 trees are heading for the West Midlands.

The free trees, funded by Sainsbury's, Ikea, the People's Postcode Lottery and Yorkshire Tea, are a mix of hazel, rowan, hawthorn, common oak, silver birch, wild cherry, elder, dogwood and holly.

Applications are now open for school and community tree packs. Go to woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/ for more details.

Record 122 events at business festival

Report by John Corser

THE Black Country Business Festival has grown to take in 122 different events in its two-week programme.

The festival, originated by the Black Country Chamber of Commerce and partnered by DY5 – Dudley's business and innovation enterprise zone – will run from April 23 to May 4.

Tickets to attend the events are already available on the website www.blackcountrybusinessfestival.com and the majority of the events are completely free to attend.

The programme ranges from seminars, workshops, conferences and exhibitions to round-table debates, careers speed networking events and exclusive, behind-the-scenes tours of some of the Black Country's best businesses.

Funding

Subjects vary widely across many key sectors with events about corporate finance, credit and funding, food safety, land acquisition, property development and investment opportunities, overseas trading, careers, apprenticeships and skills.

Councillor Patrick Harley, leader of Dudley Council, said: "We are delighted through DY5 to be supporting the Black Country Business Festival. It's a massive event.

"With more than 7,000 attendees expected, people will be coming from far and wide to see and hear all the fantastic things the Black Country can offer.

"Businesses here are leading the way nationally and internationally in the fields of innovation, culture and commerce, and this festival will give them a perfect shop window.

"It's really important that DY5 is at



DY5, Dudley's business and innovation enterprise zone, is a partner of the fortnight-long festival of business

the forefront of such initiatives. Creating 7,000 new jobs and offering homes for 300 new firms, with the incentive of business rate relief for five years, the festival will hopefully help us spread the word to national and potentially international audiences."

Corin Crane, chief executive of the Black Country Chamber said: "It's utterly brilliant how the Black Country has pulled together to make the first business festival so diverse and

exciting and something that will really show off the innovation, culture and commerce, the 'can-do' attitude of our workforce and huge investment potential of the area.

Choose

"With 122 events, there is plenty to choose from," he added. "Anyone can attend – it doesn't matter whether they work in an SME or a large corporate organisation, whether they

are start up businesses or are seeking employment.

"I guarantee everyone will find something in the business festival that will be useful.

"To get tickets, visit the website to see which events will be suitable and register to attend – it's as simple as that.

"Most events are absolutely free, but tickets are available on a first-come, first-served basis."

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Aids threat by burglar using syringe as weapon

A BURGLAR in Dudley who declared that he had Aids before stabbing a man with a hypodermic syringe has been jailed for more than five years.

Scott Pooler had been caught breaking into the home of a disabled couple aged in their 80s Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

The elderly couple returned home with a younger friend to find the 42-year-old criminal inside their Hillcrest Road home on February 13.

The defendant pulled out a syringe, said that he had Aids, and warned he was going to stab the younger man who was blocking his escape.

Mr Paul Spratt, prosecuting, said the couple's friend bravely ignored the threat and received puncture wounds to a hand after grabbing hold of Pooler. He held onto him for about 10 minutes until police arrived to arrest the burglar.

The victim was taken to hospital and tested for Aids and Hepatitis B but will not know if he is in the clear for several months, the court was told. Pooler had stolen £2 worth of coins from a jar.

Miss Nicole Steers, defending, said drug user Pooler had 'only used the needle to scare people'.

Pooler, of Heathfield Road, Lozells, pleaded guilty to robbery and possession of cocaine and was jailed for five years and four months. He had 24 previous convictions.

Jobs under threat at Carpetright

CARPETRIGHT jobs are under threat as it draws up sweeping restructuring plans which will close poorly-performing stores and see it call on investors for up to £60 million.

The embattled retailer said it was 'exploring' a company voluntary arrangement to help shore up its financial position, a move which would allow it to close loss-making shops and secure deep discounts on rental costs.

If the CVA goes ahead, Carpetright would push through an equity issue of between £40 million and £60m to fund plans to reboot the business.

The group has 409 UK shops including branches at Dudley's Merry Hill, Wolverhampton, Walsall, Kidderminster, Oldbury, Stafford and two in Cannock.

XB being bottled

HOLDEN'S Brewery is bottling one of its popular range of Black Country beers for the first time.

The Woodseton-based brewery will be selling XB, its 4.1 per cent bitter, from its Sedgley Road West shop.

A fairytale ending for abandoned Elsa



Cousins Sophia Freeman (left) and Philippa Haywood with Elsa

AN abandoned dog found close to death at a Black Country nature reserve has brought happiness to a mother and daughter.

French mastiff Elsa almost did not make it when she was discovered almost frozen at Corngreaves Nature Reserve in Cradley Heath at the end of last year.

Birmingham's Animal House charity got the call to help and staff were shocked at the state of the dog, who was given the name Elsa, after one of the characters in the film Frozen. She weighed about 17kg, and was skin and bones, but animal rescuers nurtured her back to health.

Her story was shared online and Elsa soon attracted a celebrity following with more than 400 people going to see her at a 'meet and greet' event at Your Vets in Smethwick.

Elsa has now finally found her forever home with Louise Haywood and her 25-year-old daughter Philippa, in Northfield, Birmingham.

Elsa, thought to be about four, has quickly settled in with her new owners, as well as feline friends Daisy and Fifi and rescue sheepdog Fluff.

Philippa and Louise revealed how Elsa's arrival helped cure their broken hearts after two of their pets died.

Philippa said: "We suffered two tragic losses within 12 weeks of each other, our bull mastiffs Juno and Ivan, both aged four. It left us heart-broken. We had watched Elsa's story and she came to us to foster after not getting along with the previous fosterer's dog. And we didn't want her to leave.

"It's like she's always been here - she has brought the family so much love and laughter."

Dozens of new council homes are on the way

DOZENS of council homes will be constructed in Dudley in a drive to build 'affordable' properties.

Almost 30 homes are expected to be ready for rent in the next few weeks, while work on several other schemes gets under way.

First to complete will be five homes on Butler's Crescent, the site of the former Dudley Guest Hospital, which is being developed by Waters with the council.

When completed, the development will offer 118 properties for sale and 39 for rent through Dudley Council, 34 of which have already been completed and rented. The five remaining homes are due to be completed at the end of this month.

In addition, up to 20 council homes on a development off Middlepark Road in Dudley will be available to rent in the next month. Of the 130 homes being built on the site by Keepmoat Homes, 42 will be available for council tenants and the remaining properties for outright sale.

Four new bungalows off Moat Drive, adjacent to Margaret Vine Court, in Halesowen are also due for completion, with the scheme being delivered by Jessup Brothers.

Standards

Councillor Laura Taylor, cabinet member for housing, said: "With so many developments completing, ongoing or about to start, it's clear that our commitment to building new homes in the borough remains.

"We want to continue to raise standards and build quality homes that are on a par with what's being developed in the private sector, but are affordable to our tenants."

Work is also well under way to build 16 apartments on the site of a former row of shops on Beech Road, Kingswinford.

Work has also started on site this week to build 12 one-bedroom apartments on the site of a former furniture store on Wolverhampton Street, Dudley, 12 bungalows at Crowle Drive in Stourbridge and 10 houses on land off Wychbury Road in Stourbridge.

People can view properties available for rent via the council's lettings website - see www.dudleyathome.org.uk for details.

Hotshot Rachel ready for the Games



Rachel Wallader who will be representing Team England at the Commonwealth Games. Photo: Gary Mitchell

AN athlete will be temporarily swapping her job at Sandwell College for Australia's Gold Coast when she represents Team England in shot put at the Commonwealth Games.

Rachel Wallader, 28, is part of the athletics squad heading Down Under for the games, which start on April 4. She finished fourth at the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow after throwing a personal best but is aiming to improve on that when the Games get under way on April 12.

"It's great to represent my country again in a sport I love. It's a great feeling wearing your country's colours," said Rachel, who took up athletics when she was 10.

"I joined Halesowen Athletics Club, where Julie Bellfield carried me through until she felt I had outgrown her shot put coaching. I wouldn't be where I am now if she hadn't pushed me in the right direction all those years ago."

NEWS IN BRIEF

£100 dog fouling fine is introduced

A NEW dog fouling fining scheme has gone live in Dudley borough.

Owners can be hit with £100 fines after Dudley Council brought in the measure to deter dog-walkers from leaving dog mess in parks and open spaces.

The measures have also brought in dog exclusion zones where dogs cannot be brought into children's play areas.

The scheme was signed off by councillor Karen Shakespeare, cabinet member for environmental services on Friday. She said: "We have received a lot of good feedback regarding this measure."

Heritage helpers plea at archives

HERITAGE and local history enthusiasts are being recruited to gather information on Dudley town centre.

Volunteers are wanted to help collect stories about the historic central area for the borough's archives. The project forms part of the Townscape Heritage Initiative. A free training event is being held for the project on April 14 from 10am until 3.30pm at the Dudley Archives and Local History Centre in Tipton Road. Places must be booked by calling the adult learning team on 01384 818143 or email viv.webb@dudley.gov.uk

Choir singing in the cavern again

A BLACK Country choir will be going underground again this summer.

Cradley Heath Male Voice Choir is to perform an evening concert in the Singing Cavern under Dudley on August 4. The 35-strong choir, which formed in 1912, has performed previously for Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust.

The boat taking the audience will depart at 7pm from the trust's The Portal headquarters. Tickets are £12 and are available online at www.dudleycanaltrust.org.uk or by calling 0121 557 6265.

Slimline Tales in library talk from local author

AN author is to give a talk and a reading from his works at Kinver Community Library.

Roger Noons, from Kingswinford, will be visiting the library on April 17 at 7.15pm.

His latest volume of short fiction is called Slimline Tales. Copies signed by the author will be available at £6 on the night. It costs £2 to attend. Places need to be reserved on (01384) 872348.

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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews



Curtain up on many more years of misery

WALKING through Dudley at the weekend, doing the weekly search for the shops, it struck me. Wandering between Dudley College Evolve, Dudley College Aspire, Dudley College Broadway Campus, and Dudley College Sixth, I realised: what this town really needs is another college campus.

Actually, that's not strictly true. In that it's not true at all. But it does seem to be the thought process of the leader of Dudley Council, who a few weeks ago spoke of "some exciting plans" for the town's disused Hippodrome theatre.

The exciting plans, it turns out, involve asking Dudley College if it would like to knock down the Hippodrome and build a college building on the site, ending "years of misery". Which is interesting, because when the council bought the theatre eight years ago, it said it was part of a comprehensive regeneration scheme to "create a leisure and tourism hub". Nothing was said about "years of misery".

Seriously, though, what would actually be less exciting than another college building in the town? A national paint-drying exhibition? An audience with Karen Brady? A couple of hours listening to Wolves supporters droning on about their Champions League ambitions?

Councillor Patrick Harley says the college has been at the forefront of the town's regeneration, and it has spent a lot of money on new buildings, many of them very nice. But does filling prime development sites with buildings most of us will never set foot in really constitute "regeneration"? Yes it will bring students into town, which is great for Greggs and Costa. But students, by definition, tend to have low disposable incomes. A strange way of reviving a struggling high street.

Now, I'm sorry if I keep banging on about this, and perhaps it is time to take up stamp collecting or something. But it is hard to think how successive councils, of both colours, could have handled this worse.

First, the "years of misery" were brought on entirely by the council using taxpayers' money to buy a building it had no real plans for. Then it misjudged the public mood, assuming it could be quietly demolished without fuss. It then attempted to quell the inevitable backlash with a string of uninspiring plans. And when a private company wanted to invest £8 million in the theatre, it dithered about car parking. Now the council has run out of patience.

Realistically, we can't expect councils to pour millions into renovating old theatres. But if this is the best it can come up with, then I suspect there will be many more years of misery to come.

If fee was agreed for tennis TV work stop complaining



Christopher Eccleston – now does not refer to his time on Doctor Who



Martina Navratilova – not happy that she was paid less than John McEnroe



Boris Johnson – was this just a sudden case of Biggles Syndrome

Serving up moans over pay equality

ARE you beginning to suffer from equality overload? Me, too. Martina Navratilova complains that she was paid "only" £15,000 for her stint as a commentator at Wimbledon while John McEnroe got "at least £150,000." Really? So flippin' what? Is it worth pointing out that, at the peak of their game, both of these tennis stars were paid much, much more than the ball boys? In spats like this involving the super-rich there's only one question that should be asked: Were you paid the sum that you or your agent negotiated and agreed to accept? If the answer is yes, stop wasting our time.

If tennis throws up pay anomalies, God help us if the equality police get to work on Glastonbury. I strongly suspect that performers at music festivals are paid not by gender, age or race but solely on the basis of their market value.

AND while we're at it, has anyone noticed that the winner in Olympic sports gets a gold medal but the runner-up only gets silver and number three gets bronze? How long can this scandal go on?

I WAS rather hoping the Cambridge Analytica data scandal was going to fade away before I had to pretend I understood it.

BUT basically it's about the harvesting, selling and misuse of billions of items of personal information about millions of Facebook users. Yet surely it only qualifies as a genuine scandal if those people are scandalised. Are they?

IF you remember the Cold War and George Orwell's novel Nineteen Eighty-four, you belong to a generation which grew up cherishing privacy and living in fear of Big Brother. But to

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



day millions of people seem not only willing but eager to blab every detail of their own lives on social media. Secrets tortured out of Winston Smith in Room 101 are today freely volunteered. Some folk seem perfectly relaxed about their information being bought and sold, so long as it gets them a fleeting moment of fame or makes buying things on eBay a nano-second quicker. Middle-aged liberal hacks and crusty politicians may queue up to express outrage at this cyber-scandal but how many kids give a damn?

A TIME Lord has become a non-person. There is clearly no love lost between Christopher Eccleston and the BBC whom he accuses of putting him on a blacklist after he left Doctor Who. Starring as Macbeth at Stratford (and doing a brilliant job), the actor's attitude to Auntie Beeb is seen in the production's programme where artists list the film, theatre and TV work of which they are most proud. Eccleston's lengthy CV does not even mention Doctor Who.

A QUICK-build bridge collapsed in Florida, killing six people. Councils all over the States are waiting to find out why. As one official in Wisconsin put it: "We want to . . . see if any of the lessons learned would be applicable here." Bridges have been with us since the first cave-man laid a tree across a stream a million years ago. The problem is not discovering new lessons. It's remembering old ones.

YEARS from now historians will wonder how a

British foreign secretary made the quantum leap from a few traces of nerve agent in Salisbury to personally blaming the Russian president. And then they will examine the footage more closely and notice that Boris Johnson was speaking at the Battle of Britain Bunker museum in Uxbridge, standing right in front of the most iconic warplane of all time. Boris may have been suffering from a sudden case of Biggles Syndrome, an irrational stirring of the blood caused by close exposure to a Supermarine Spitfire.

BIGGLES Syndrome can be serious. At about the same time as Boris was going off-script, I watched a 1944 DC-3 Dakota transport plane fly over in black-and-white D-Day livery. I had a sudden impulse to invade Normandy.

NEVER let it be said that, when it comes to punishing the ungodly, readers lack inventiveness. After a court report on a particularly unpleasant attack on two pensioners, here's one online suggestion of what to do with the defendant: "He should have all of his skin removed with acid and a sanding machine, every bone broken with a sledgehammer, every joint destroyed with a power drill, every appendage amputated with garden shears. Only then should he be put out of his misery, by being fed to a swarm of rats." Put him out of his misery? What bleeding-heart, kid-glove liberal nonsense is this? No wonder we lost the Empire.

FAREWELL, winter, and with it the annual debate about what to call the pain when you put frozen hands in warm water after a snowball fight. A friend suggests 'finger cramps' but at Chateau Rhodes we are sticking with 'hot aches'. Suggestions welcome (apart from the obvious one that I ought to get out more).

TALKING POINT



Firms can do more to build their reputation

REGULAR Talking Point readers may recall I previously mentioned a parking fine I received for overstaying my welcome. I suggested common sense would hopefully prevail and that the fine may be waived on appeal. It wasn't. So, accept it, move on, live and learn.

Now another parking matter has led me to think about big firms, how they treat their customers and how word of mouth can enhance – or ruin – a reputation.

My issue this time relates to a car park in Wolverhampton. A number of us travel in together and use a particular car park near the city centre, which is reasonably priced at just £2.40 per day. To obtain a ticket, the last three letters of the car's registration must be inputted.

Fair enough, I suppose, as it prevents a driver leaving the car park from passing on to another just arriving.

We know its aim is to make a profit. However, it is not so easy for customers to get any money back.

One morning, after paying our fee, we realised only the last two letters of the registration had been keyed in. So, fearing this would be noted and action taken, we bought another ticket. This time with the correct three letters.

I rang the company to explain this and was told that if I emailed a brief description with pictures of the tickets the money would be reimbursed. An automated email came back, to say the would be responded to as soon as possible.

A week later, having still not heard anything back, I rang them. "The emails are usually picked up after seven days so contact us again in a week if you've heard nothing," I was politely told.

It was three weeks later before I got in touch again. Guess what? There was no record of my email ever being received.

I was advised to resend the original email, it would go to the top of the pile and be dealt with. The result? Another automated reply, which probably means another seven days before it is even looked at.

And all this for just £2.40. Is it worth it? Well, yes it is. It's my money. How many others, for the sake of a paltry sum would think it's not worth the hassle? How many extra £2.40s is that for the company?

I could refuse to use the car park, or others owned by the firm, and tell others to do the same, reducing its income. There are alternative options after all.

It's in this way that reputations can be built or tarnished. Such actions discourage clients, not attract them – and I believe they should be brought to account.

They make enough money as it is without holding on to my £2.40 as well.

MARK SHIPP

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Heartened by plan for new pool in town

I WAS heartened to read (over the net) that Dudley is poised to build a new leisure centre. Let's hope that it will be far more purposive than its predecessor in Wellington Road, Dudley.

Though I moved to North Devon in 1985, my family and I visited the area, staying at my mother's in Kingswinford.

Being a regular swimmer, I used Brierley Hill pool (and sauna), but I understand that this is no longer there.

Eventually, my mother had to go into care in Wellington Road, Dudley, and so, on occasion, I patronised the leisure

centre there, prior to visiting her. On my first visit, I was underwhelmed by the size of the pool there and lack of discipline enforced by the staff.

There were no 'anti-turbulence' lanes, people swimming widths and others swimming 'lengths', with others who were not swimming having a chat in all locations, making swimmers make a detour, in order to avoid collisions.

On one memorable occasion I was asked to wait until someone got out of the pool, as one of the poolside staff was off work and they were unable to

allow more than (if I recall correctly) 50 members of the public in the pool without another member of poolside staff to monitor swimmers!

On occasion, when I stayed at The Copthorne Hotel, in Brierley Hill, I availed myself of their facilities. Gym good, pool adequate, but the combination of those, along with a sauna, jacuzzi and steam room, absolutely perfect! Fantastic staff too!

GERRY E POULSON
North Devon

Talk when you match the mayor

THROUGH your newspaper I should just like to give my answer to Bill Etheridge on his rantings about the Labour Party in Dudley and about the Mayor of Dudley, who is a gentleman who some years ago gave me a lot of help.

I was asked by the head of the youth centre in Kingswinford if I could form a fishing club for juniors, which I took on.

We had no money and it was hard to get it off the ground, then Dave Tyler gave me information and the forms to see if I could get some money.

We were granted £1,100 funds and that was down to Dave. Twelve months after we had £6,000 funds to buy a minibus.

So I say to Mr Etheridge, when you have done as much for the folks at Sedgley as Dave Tyler has done for Wall Heath and Kingswinford you can stand up and be counted.

MR G GUMINS
Kingswinford

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Dudley Chronicle,
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Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

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Why take refugees?

WHY has our council put our rates up when they are bringing 20 Syrian families, who will deprive 20 local families of accommodation.

We will have to pay their rates and rent.

And why are their men not staying to fight for their country, which we veterans did with pride and loyalty to our UK.

S LEONARD
Wollscote

Photo call

I AM compiling a 'memory book' for my son and I would like to make a request, please.

Does anyone out there have any photos of groups or events at the Wolverhampton Teachers College for Day Students between 1966 and 1969? If possible, I would be looking to borrow them and to copy and return. It would be much appreciated if anyone can help. I can be contacted at 40 Ellesmere Road, Cannock, Staffordshire, WS11 1PJ or on 07572 661706.

D BURDEN

Enoch does not need a blue plaque

I AM, and have always been, a great supporter and admirer of Enoch Powell.

Nevertheless, I would not be in favour of erecting a blue plaque to his memory in Wolverhampton.

This would simply provide the 'politically correct' opposition group with the opportunity to destroy or deface it and I would not give them that satisfaction.

Enoch does not need such baubles to cement his legacy in Wolverhampton.

He will live forever in the memory of all true Wulfrunians as demonstrated by the 70-plus per cent who voted in favour of a plaque in the recent Express & Star poll.

He will be remembered long after political midgets, such as those leading the opposition, have been forgotten, but in the meantime the tail, as usual in these cases, continues to wag the dog.

B WILLIAMS
Wordsley

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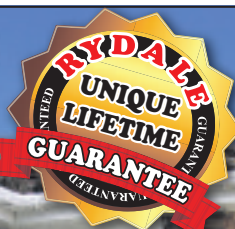
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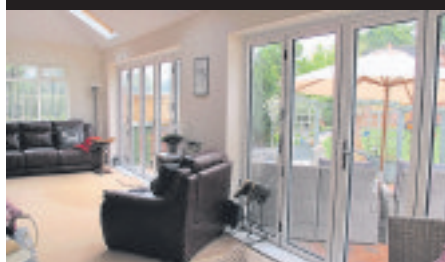
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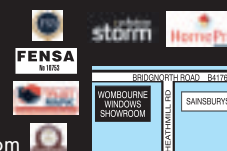
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Business boss is pleased by progress

BUSINESSES are growing faster in the Black Country than the national average.

Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) chairman Stewart Towe gave the good news as he addressed more than 100 business professionals at the group's annual general meeting.

Running through highlights from the past year, he praised the LEP for breaking their record number of new businesses started since 2004, with 37,490 firms launched – a jump of 2,500 from last year.

He also mentioned the upcoming Commonwealth Games to be held in Birmingham in 2022, which would significantly boost tourism in the area, and result in a new aquatic centre in Smethwick.

Mr Towe said: "The number of jobs in the Black Country is also at 446,500 – a growth of 14,000 since 2012.

"Black Country LEP is also in second place after London for number of new businesses to reach £1 million turnover from 2010 to 2016. Our growth rates are outstripping national averages. It's all been very exciting."

More good news included wages being up across the Black Country and the number claiming key out of work benefits being at its lowest level for more than a decade.

Student Sophie wins prize job at top spa



Sophie Roberts with her Dudley College tutor Katrina Bradin

A BEAUTY therapy student wowed the judges at a prestigious competition to scoop a highly-coveted spa job.

Sophie Roberts, 20, a student at Dudley College, was crowned Ragdale Hall Spa Student of Excellence 2018.

The finalists were required to carry out a one-to-one interview, a theory knowledge test paper and two treatments including, a 40-minute manicure and a 50-minute full body massage.

The contest was held at the spa in Leicestershire where Sophie, from Kingswinford, will now take up a full-time beauty therapist position.

She also won a spa day for two, £500 on completion of one year's service, a trophy and certificate, an advanced beauty therapy training programme and an Elemis gift pack.

Sophie said: "I'm absolutely overwhelmed – this really is a dream come true. The journey from start to finish has been so rewarding, having learned so much and having made some amazing friendships along the way."

Runners-up included Katie Gorst from Halesowen College, who also secured a full-time position at Ragdale Hall.

Firm will help council on care information

A COMPANY has been brought on board to develop a social care information technology (IT) platform for Dudley.

IT firm Liquid Logic has been appointed by Dudley Council to get the project up and running by spring next year. The platform will replace a string of different systems currently in place and aims to bring together information in one place.

Councillor Nicolas Barlow, cabinet member for adult social care, said: "With social care continually changing, we need to ensure we have the correct systems in place so we can deal with the complex nature that many cases present."

"The new system will help create a much-needed joined up approach to the way we work, to make it easier for staff to do their job and ultimately offer the best care possible."

Councillor Anne Millward, cabinet member for children's services, said: "We are confident this investment will offer long-term benefits as we continue to strive to improve."

Company's £3m Prime move is set to create 30 skilled jobs

A GLOBAL company that develops pipes for the fuel industries has opened a new £3 million plant in Kingswinford and is aiming to create up to 30 new skilled jobs.

International Piping Products (Europe) has agreed a 10-year lease with London and Cambridge Properties for

the unit at Prime Point on the Pennett Estate in Kingswinford.

The company, based in Staffordshire, will manufacture bespoke fasteners and machined components predominantly for the oil and gas, power generation and aerospace industries from the 21,740 sq ft unit.

It hopes to create up to 30 jobs over the next 12 months, with roles such as CNC programmers, machinists,

thread rollers, forge masters, quality technicians and sales executives.

Jared Ayres, chief executive of IPP Group, said: "We've been growing over the past few years and needed to find new premises where we can continue our operations. Having grown up within a mile of the facility, I feel tremendously proud to be able to bring jobs to an area which holds such great memories for me."

Do the locomotion with pop star maker

MUSIC icon Pete Waterman will talk about his life in pop and love of locomotives at an event in Birmingham this summer.

Producer and songwriter Pete, who is a supporter of Walsall FC, is also a railway enthusiast and had a major impact on the 1980s pop scene. The former soul DJ who worked on the railways before his music career had a total of 22 number one singles as part of the Stock Aitken Waterman team with many acts, including Rick Astley, Jason Donovan and Kylie Minogue. Coventry-born Pete also co-presented The Hit Man and Her with Michaela Strachan and was a judge on talent shows Pop Idol and Popstars: The Rivals. An Evening With Pete Waterman is at Birmingham Town Hall on June 13.

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Chairman hands over the chain

Kingswinford TG

AT the Annual General Meeting on March 12, chairman Enid Fennell welcomed Alva Staves as a visitor and the return of three members who had been absent at earlier meetings but were at last able to return.

The AGM began with Chris Moy reading the Standing Orders. The chairman's report was read by Enid Fennell and the treasurer's by Sue Wilson. Both were readily accepted and it was felt the guild was in good health. The officers for the forthcoming year were announced and the committee was completed by Barbara White, Joyce Robins, Sally Fowler and Pauline Bird.

Thanks were extended to the previous committee and also to several people who helped out in various unseen acts, like the husband who kindly prints the programme for the year ahead.

A letter from headquarters was brought to the notice of members and will be discussed in full later. The mandate for the national AGM in Brighton in mid-June was announced.

A quiz organised by Sue Wilson followed. There would be no winners or losers but chocolates were given out. It raised the question of the federation quiz in May. Three members volunteered, but a fourth is needed.

The raffle prizes were drawn and Enid invested Chris Moy the new chairman, with chain of office.

Historian makes a welcome return

Ladies go on stately home mystery tour

THE February meeting was well attended with 46 members present and Julie Willets in the chair.

Apologies were read, followed by minutes of the previous meeting which were passed and signed.

Treasurer Margaret Gregory gave a favourable account of the financial situation and secretary Sue Ward read the main points of interest from the recent federation meeting.

The bowls outdoor season will commence on April 5. Members are encouraged to show their crafting skills at 'tea and talent' afternoons. The annual dinner will be held at the Red Lion, Bobbington, in May.

A canal trip with supper has been arranged, to take place in June. The

Wollaston E TWG

month's speaker was Ian Bott, who, with the aid of slides, took the ladies on a mystery tour of stately homes in the West Midlands, Derbyshire and the Cotswolds.

It is surprising how many of these homes are in existence and the stories connected to them were both interesting and amusing.

At the conclusion of the meeting the chairman thanked the tea ladies, Elizabeth Grove and Gill Mackenzie.

Raffle prizes went to Elizabeth Grove and Maureen Baker. Jean Latham and Elizabeth Grove were the month's competition winners.

Dudley South Ladies Luncheon Club

THE March luncheon was chaired by past chairman Mary Jones. Sadly, Ann Rogers was unable to attend as her husband Michael had passed away suddenly.

Condolences were sent to her from all members together with flowers and cards.

Some 33 members enjoyed an excellent three-course lunch and welcomed back speaker John Sperry, a local historian.

Multi-talented John surprised everyone by opening the lid of the piano and playing a delightful piece before starting his talk, John's Antique Roadshow.

He produced old items with a story - such as a Colman's mustard tin. He told members about their other products and what philanthropists the family were - improving the lives of their workers.

He also produced an old bar of Sunlight soap and talked about the Lever Brothers and Port Sunlight before finishing with a flurry on the piano.

Glass talk simply smashing

AT the March 27 meeting, in the Corn Exchange at Kidderminster Town Hall, Kate Round gave a talk about the History of the Stourbridge Glass Industry.

Kate is a tour guide and outreach worker at the Red House Glass Cone and as an acknowledged expert on the subject of glass-making, has appeared on Bargain Hunt.

Glassmaking began in Wordsley and Stourbridge in the 17th century, mainly as

Wyre Forest Historical Research Group

a small cottage industry. With the growth of the local canal network it attracted workers from the surrounding rural areas.

The industry reached its zenith between 1850 and 1900 when the glass craftsmen were regarded as the finest in the western world, as exemplified by the famous Portland Vase.

Spring SPECIALS



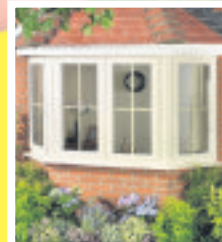
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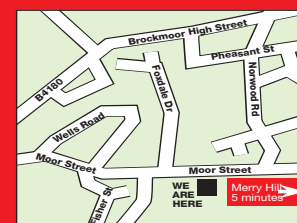
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Statue of hero ready to be cast in bronze

THE final stages of work on a bronze statue of anti-Nazi hero Frank Foley is set to begin.

Midlands artist Andy de Comyn has completed a full stage clay model of the 'British Schindler', who repeatedly risked his life to save Jews in 1930s Nazi Germany when working for the British Government.

The model, which depicts Major Foley quietly seated on a park bench, will now cast in bronze in the coming weeks.

The statue is set to take pride of place in Mary Stevens Park, just down the road from Major Foley's former home.

Dudley North Labour MP Ian Austin, who spearheaded the campaign for the tribute with support from Stourbridge Conservative MP Margot James, said: "I am delighted at the progress of the statue."

"The final piece should be ready next by the summer so people can learn about Major Foley and our country's role in fighting for free-

dom, democracy and tolerance against Nazi Germany. I can't wait until the final statue is unveiled."

Intelligence officer Major Foley used his position working undercover as a passport control officer at the British embassy in Berlin to help Jews escape the horrors of Nazi Germany.

He even entered concentration camps such as Sachsenhausen and presented visas to the camp authorities so that Jewish prisoners could be freed.

After the Second World War, he retired to Stourbridge where he lived at Eveson Road in Norton until his death in 1958.

He was accorded the status Righteous Amongst the Nations by Israel in 1999, and awarded British Hero of the Holocaust posthumously in 2010. In 2004 a plaque was erected in his honour at the British Embassy in Berlin, and last year a tree and plaque were unveiled in Mary Stevens Park.



MP Ian Austin is seen admiring the clay version of the Foley statue with sculptor Andy de Comyn

Council boss hopes for college deal over Hippodrome

DUDLEY College has been urged to end 'years of misery' by taking over the town's dilapidated Hippodrome.

Councillor Patrick Harley, the leader of Dudley Council, said the college was 'an ideal fit' for the landmark site on Castle Hill, which has been taken back under the authority's control after campaigners failed to revive it as a venue - although they claim the council didn't give them a long enough lease.

The college is understood to be one of several interested parties, although no formal move has been made.

At the end of last year Dudley College entered into 'informal talks' with the council over a scheme build a new campus on the site of the former theatre. But Councillor Harley said 'no firm offers' had yet been received.

"We are going through the formal process of getting the land back and we are duty bound to do something with it," he said. "I would expect interested parties to come forward in the near future. The future of the Hippodrome has been a major issue in Dudley. Since it closed there have been years of misery."

"Dudley College has been responsible for a lot of the developments in the town - you could say they started Dudley's regeneration - and if anyone could make the best use of the site, it could be them."

Backing signalled for phone campaign

A BUSINESS group in the Black Country is supporting a nationwide campaign aiming to improve mobile phone signals.

The Black Country Chamber of Commerce is supporting No More Not Spots, a project with the aim of banishing bad phone coverage.

Launched by the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC), the campaign hopes to bring together business communities to work out solutions to improve coverage.

Companies and individuals across the Black Country are being urged to get on board and report issues and not-spot areas.

Poor signals hamper businesses. A recent survey by the BCC of more than 1,400 companies found that a fifth of firms say the UK mobile phone network does not meet their needs in accessing new and existing customers, suppliers and employees.

Connectivity

Chief executive of the Black Country Chamber, Corin Crane, said: "Connectivity is becoming increasingly vital for businesses and as a region we need to make sure our digital infrastructure is suited to the needs of modern-day operations and processes."

"Based on feedback from our members, we have committed to making improvements to digital connectivity a focal point of our Transport and Infrastructure Campaign; a programme that aims to harness an environment that will enable

By Megan Archer

businesses to thrive in an increasingly inter-connected world.

"As densely populated an area as the Black Country is, there remain many areas across the region with poor digital connectivity, which is hampering the growth prospects of the business community and the local economy."

"We wholeheartedly support the national campaign being launched and will be working closely with both the British Chambers of Commerce and the local business community to help eliminate not spots throughout the Black Country."

Launching the campaign in London, director general of the BCC Dr Adam Marshall said: "A reliable mobile phone signal is one of the most basic requirements for any business, as more and more conversations and transactions take place while people are on the go."

Visit blackcountrychamber.co.uk/transport for more information.

Run the king's route

RUNNERS will be following in the footsteps of a king when they take part in the Wolves and Wombourne Half Marathon on Saturday.

It follows the Monarchs Way, the escape route used by King Charles II in 1651 after his defeat by Parliament in the Battle of Worcester. The self-navigating event, for teams of two or three, is being hosted by Mash Running Events. See mashrunning.co.uk for more details.

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£14m revamp of office block as new apartments

A £14 million revamp of a landmark office block in Dudley into modern new apartments for people eager to get on the property ladder is nearing completion.

A total of 141 flats in Falcon House will go on the market as part of the project by entrepreneur Arran Bailey. The 18-month project is due for completion in June.

Mr Bailey, managing director of ALB Black Country Properties, bought the eight-storey office block, in The Minories, in 2016.

The regeneration project has seen the 88,000 sq ft building transformed into 65 one-bed and 76 two-bed flats, with the first show home now available to view.

Mr Bailey said: "This latest development will provide much needed housing for people in Dudley."

Professionals

"The new apartments look great and will appeal to young professionals in the town who may have been struggling to get on the property ladder."

"These apartments will go a long way in regenerating the area, attracting footfall and boosting the economy." He added: "We look forward to inviting people to come and view the show home to see what we have done with the building."

Joe Billingham, from Prosperity-Wealth, said planned transport improvements were helping to drive sales. He explained: "The units are selling very quickly due to the location, yield and potential for capital appreciation – particularly once news broke of the new Metro link connection



Developers Joe Billingham, left, and Arran Bailey took on Falcon House into central Birmingham, meaning the commute will be just a 20 minute transfer into New Street."

Mr Bailey owns a large portfolio of residential and retail regeneration projects across the UK with the ALB group specialising in the conversion of residential and commercial properties.

Nigel Rhodes, managing director of DL Rhodes, the building contractors who worked on the project, said: "Once

again it has been fantastic working closely with ALB. This is our third large development with the company."

"The apartments are looking excellent and we are looking forward to handing them over towards the end of June. I have spoken to a lot of businesses and they are buzzing because they realise it will bring a lot of footfall into the area. It will boost the economy and make the area look superb."

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that Christ Jesus came into the world to
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Charity offer Lego therapy to help children explain

LEGO is being used as therapy for children with communication problems by a Black Country charity.

Murray Hall Community Trust in Tipton will pilot the scheme with local schools over the next month.

It will see staff like young people's worker Sophie Roberts working through problems with youngsters using the popular building bricks.

Kelly Freeman, senior project co-ordinator, said: "We are piloting using Lego therapy within Sandwell to work with children who have social communication difficulties.

"They sometimes don't really want to talk about what they are

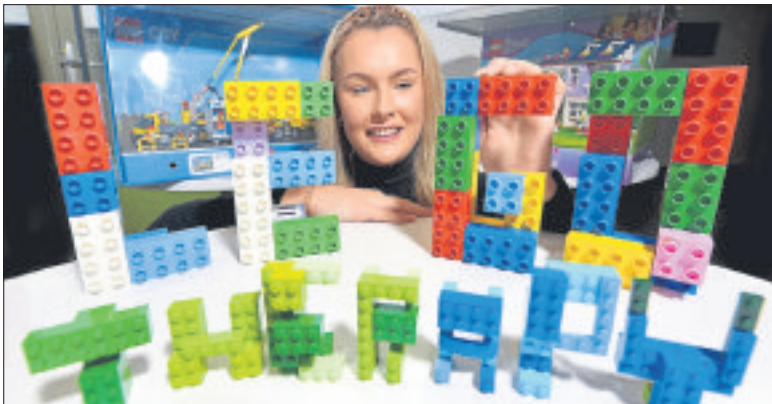
going through, but this can be expressed through Lego."

The charity, which has been operating for nearly 25 years, is believed to be the first in the region providing the service.

Kelly said: "We are always looking for innovative projects. We've researched the impact of Lego and all of it is been popular."

Although the organisation provides a range of support services for all ages, the latest project is just for children.

Kelly said: "We've run a couple of ad hoc groups and they have had really positive feedback."



Young people's worker Sophie Roberts, from Codsall, with the Lego that will be used to help children

MP vows to tackle 'barbaric' bird trade

SOUTH Staffs MP and Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson has promised extra help to tackle the 'cruel and barbaric' trade in captured songbirds.

Measures will include drones equipped with thermal imaging cameras to catch poachers.

Equipment used to trap birds on a UK military base in Cyprus has already been seized and destroyed as part of a crackdown. The number of songbirds being illegally killed in the sovereign base area to supply restaurants fell by 70 per cent last year, wildlife experts say.

Ambelopoulia is a controversial dish of grilled, fried, pickled or boiled songbirds which is a traditional dish in Cyprus but has been made illegal. More than 260,000 birds such as black caps and robins were trapped and killed last autumn on British territory, the RSPB said.

Conservative MP for Kinver Mr Williamson said: "Bird trapping is not only a cruel and barbaric trade, it lines the pockets of criminal gangs."

Hit and run driver is jailed for five years

A SPEEDING hit and run driver, who left a teenage moped rider lying in the road with life changing injuries, is starting a five year jail sentence.

Danny Dale ignored warnings to slow down before overtaking a taxi and failed to see 16-year-old Declan Osborne making a right turn until it was too late.

CCTV showed the Honda Civic, which the 26-year-old father-of-five was not insured to drive, doing more than 60mph in a 30 limit zone 200 metres before it struck the scooter, cannoned into a wall and spun back into Birmingham Road at its junction with MacMillan Road at Rowley Regis.

Shameless Dale, of Habberley Road, Blackheath, denied causing serious injury by dangerous driving and during his trial at Wolverhampton Crown Court tried to heap the blame onto his passenger - former friend Jonathan Mundle - and onto victim Declan.

Convict

But the jury took just 42 minutes to unanimously convict him of the offence.

After the verdict had been announced Judge Nicholas Webb said that the evidence was overwhelming.

He told Dale: "You have your own problems but they are as nothing when compared to those you bequeathed onto Declan by a dreadful course of dangerous driving.

"The way in which you persisted in driving at twice the speed limit or more and overtook on a junction made a serious collision unavoidable. You had been on the wrong side of the road when you hit him. Declan was totally blameless but you have sought to blame him and your passenger."



Danny Dale - speeding

The moped rider's sister, 28-year-old Nicole Osborne, who with their father has spent many hours caring for Declan since the collision, said: "As a family we can now have some closure to what was a very tragic event. We are happy that the right decision was reached.

"Declan is still undergoing extensive brain injury treatment."

The court heard that the tragic teenager was no longer capable of independent living as a result of his devastating injuries.

The collision on January 30, 2016, robbed the former student of Ormiston Forge Academy in Cradley Heath, who had wanted to become a bricklayer, of much of his intellectual functioning and destroyed his sense of taste and smell.

Hop to it for park run

AN Easter fun run and walk is being held next weekend in Coseley.

The one-mile event is taking place on Saturday, April 7, at Coseley's Silver Jubilee Park, off Mason Street at Ro-seville.

It will start from the Silver Jubilee Activity Centre and is aimed at people of all ages. The run starts at 10am.

To find out more about the event call (01384) 813747.

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New chapter written in history of iron industry

'FINANCIAL meltdown, banking crises and social unrest' – the laborious life of a 19th Century iron factory worker in the Black Country has been uncovered.

It's all thanks to a detailed new account from a local author. Grandfather Keith Robinson has lived in the area for more than 50 years, and is a direct descendant of the locally-famous Rose brothers, who owned the region's iron factories back in the 1900s.

After years of research, the 66-year-old has now penned a book, titled 'Iron, Coal & Roses', detailing one family's rise and fall in the iron industry in Moxley, Darlaston, Wednesbury, Bilston and Old Hill.

Family

The book was launched last week, with the author on hand to sign copies, during an event at Darlaston Library. There will also be another signing session on Saturday, from 1-4pm at the Black Country Living Museum.

Former history teacher Mr Robinson, who now lives in Shrewsbury, said: "My mother was a member of the Rose family – David and Daniel Rose owned the iron factories and Henry Rose, their brother, was my great-great-grandfather. He managed one of the factories in Darlaston Green.

"My mother always used to talk about how we were related to the iron industry and then when I had some time – 60 years later – I tracked all the information down.

"I wanted to see if I could add something to Black Country history by researching and writing the book. So I



A boiler explosion in Millfield, Bilston



Miners at the Blue Fry Collier in 1900



Keith Robinson with his book about the Rose family and their foundries

traced 130 people, who used to work in the Rose factories or mines, so people can see, through the book, if their family or ancestors are in there."

Mr Robinson's ancestors all lived in Darlaston and Wednesbury and were

iron workers, nut and bolt operatives and gun-lock filers. Iron, Coal & Roses priced at £9.99.

To request a copy of the book from Mr Robinson, email netcord9@hotmail.com or call 01743 873348.

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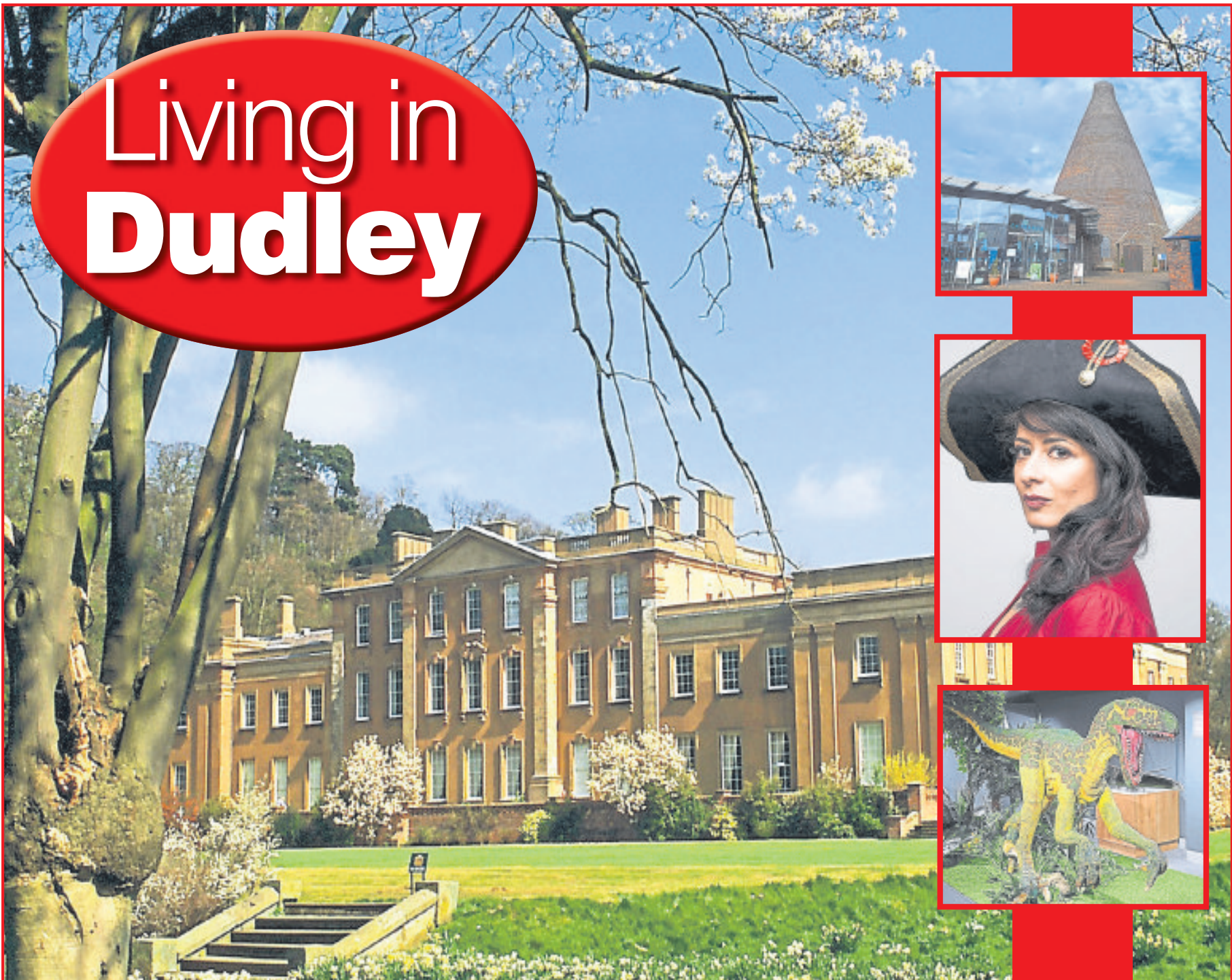
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Living in Dudley

Council to extend free car parking

Dudley Council is set to offer two hours of free parking in its town centres across Dudley borough from the start of April.

One hour of free parking is currently available in all council-owned car parks, but the cabinet is expected to pass the latest proposal that will see this doubled.

The move is part of the continuing drive to boost the number of people visiting town centres and to support local traders.



Alan Lunt, strategic director for place, said: "Shoppers and traders alike have told us how the current one hour of free parking has been a very welcome boost. 'People have told us that two hours of

free parking will make a considerable difference and we are looking forward to rolling this out across the borough from the start of next month.

"We are hoping that this move will provide a huge boost to retailers across the borough. Dudley is the only council across the whole of the West Midlands providing this incentive and is bucking the national trend, which has seen many local authorities increase car parking charges. We very much hope that this move will encourage more people to shop and spend time in our key centres."

For information on current parking tariffs in Dudley Council car parks people can visit www.dudley.gov.uk/resident/parking-roads

A zero tolerance hit squad deployed by Dudley Council in a major clampdown on litter and dog fouling in the borough are set to hit the streets in the next few days.

Kingdom Enforcement Services, made up of ex-police and military personnel armed with body cameras, is to take on responsibility for patrolling the streets, parks and open spaces across the borough for a trial 12-month period.

The firm will initially have five officers on the beat plus one team leader overseeing operations – but that is expected to increase as the pilot goes on.

It is expected to see a significant increase in the number of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) for those who drop litter or fail to pick up after their pets.

Income

The move will not cost the council a penny, with Kingdom receiving payment directly as a percentage of the financial penalties issued.

The local authority will still retain a percentage of the income from the fixed penalty notices.

The company has a proven track record of success and already works with more than 30 local authorities across the country, including Wolverhampton City Council and Birmingham City Council.

Kingdom issued more than 9,000 FPNs in Wolverhampton last year after being taken on by the local authority in the middle of 2015.

Comparative figures before they took over show just 25 were handed out from April 2014 to March 2015.

Alan Lunt, strategic director for place, said: "We have a zero tolerance attitude towards litter and dog fouling.

"I am sure the majority of law-abiding residents would agree that those who



Dudley Council has a zero tolerance policy towards people who don't bin their litter or pick up after their pets

make our borough untidy should be fined. We hope this will be a deterrent which hits offenders in the pocket and makes them think twice about dropping litter or not cleaning up after their dogs in the future.

"We will have more enforcement people on the streets, which councillors and residents are asking for regularly.

"Kingdom are a leader in the field and

are already working successfully with lots of other councils in the Black Country and beyond.

Visible

"They will be highly visible – and with the increased number of fixed penalty notices being handed out this can only lead to cleaner streets, which is what we all want."

Mark Mountford, business manager for Kingdom, said: "We're really looking forward to working with Dudley Council and the team can't wait to get out there and get cracking.

"Our results speak for themselves and the message is simple – if you drop litter or don't pick up after your dogs, there is a good chance you'll be caught and hit in the pocket."

Humbugs coffee and crafts

The Penny Farthing Arcade, Sedgley is home to Humbugs Coffee + Crafts, an independent family run coffee house. Serving speciality coffee and a variety of comfort food and sweet treats, it's home without the housework. Creative? Offering anything from ceramic painting to a good ole' Knit and Natter - Humbugs will also reveal your artsy side!

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There's lots on for all the family to enjoy across the borough



The Red House Glass Cone is in the historic Stourbridge Glass Quarter



Dudley Museum at the Archives hosts regular taster arts and crafts sessions

Living in
Dudley

Lots to see and do across the region

Visitors to the borough of Dudley will be delighted by the variety of things to see and do in the area.

Attractions are diverse and cater for all ages and offer opportunities for individuals to try something new, immerse themselves in unique environments, gain knowledge and most of all enjoy their time.

The Red House Glass Cone stands proud in the historic Stourbridge Glass Quarter. At 100ft tall it is testament to over 400 years of glass making in the area. This Grade II listed building (built C1790) is architecturally important as it is one of only four remaining in the UK. Now a museum, it offers visitors the opportunity to learn new skills in their glass studio, marvel at glass blowing, visit bespoke craft studios and exhibitions and purchase gift items. It is an ideal base to explore the Glass Quarter, with parking and an excellent coffee house.

Still within the Stourbridge Glass Quarter, you can visit the Ruskin Glass Centre, home to past greats of the glass industry – including Royal Doulton and Webb Corbett. You can enjoy pre-booked heritage tours for a small donation and learn about the history of glass making in the area. Artisans operate independent craft studios and an organic cafe offers tempting treats. Entrance to the Glass Quarter attractions are free of charge.

Dudley Zoological Gardens is home to hundreds of exotic and endangered animals. Why not take part in one of their bookable 'experience' days, or just amble around the paths taking in the World Monument Status Tecton enclosures? Located at the top of the hill you find the 11th Century motte and bailey castle. An informative guided tour will take you back through its history and perhaps you will see the infamous Grey Lady ghost.

Celebrating the Black Country heritage, the award-winning Black Country Museum takes visitors back in time with 300 years of history. Enjoy the sights, sounds, smells and tastes of a traditional industrialised landscape encompassing period shops, houses and experiences. Relive the past with original trams, traditional fish and chips and raise a glass at the Bottle & Glass Inn public house.

Why not discover the art of legging inside the fantastic Dudley Canal Tunnel and Limestone Mines? Experience a 45-minute skipper guided tour, view the spectacular light show and educational interpretation. Sample some delightful Black Country food in the on-site Gongoozler Restaurant.

Opened this year, the Dudley Museum at the Archives celebrates the borough's past. Visitors take a journey through geology displays, view collections including Dudley Castle finds, local

heroes and Stourbridge glass. You can get close to fine art including a famous Turner and the Frank Brangwyn exhibition. Regular 'taster' arts and crafts sessions and talks are held in a purpose-built room.

If you fancy indulging yourself, come along to Himley Hall & Park to enjoy their 'Indulgent Afternoon Tea' experience with delicious finger sandwiches, cakes and scones. Set in Lancelot 'Capability' Brown 180 acres designed parkland, this 18th Century country house holds many events, activities and walks throughout the year.

Dudley's 16 miles of navigable canals are ideal for walking, cycling and fishing. Or perhaps you'll take in a show at one of the borough halls which have a packed programme of entertainment. There is something for everyone, so why not visit www.discoverdudley.org.uk to find out more.



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Living in Dudley

Music and comedy on the bill



Comic Chris Ramsey is on the bill

There's lots of great live entertainment and events coming soon to Dudley Borough Halls.

Following a sold-out run at London's Menier Chocolate Factory and two critically-acclaimed West End runs, comedian David Baddiel brings his Olivier-nominated one-man show *My Family: Not The Sitcom* to Dudley Town Hall on Thursday, April 19.

Best known for his work with Frank Skinner, Baddiel's show is a 'massively disrespectful celebration' of the lives of his parents – focusing on his late mother's infidelity and his father's dementia.

Best-selling author and top comedian Shappi Khorsandi heads to Stourbridge Town Hall on Saturday, May 5 with her brand



The unique Hoot Owl, Master of Disguise, will entertain children in Stourbridge on Saturday, May 12

new show *Mistress and Misfit*. The Live at the Apollo star has whip-crack jokes and is effortlessly funny as she handles every subject with a razor-sharp wit, softened only by her deliciously mischievous delivery and endless charm.

Comedians

Meanwhile, award-winning Geordie stand-up Chris Ramsey – host of *The Chris Ramsey Show* on Comedy Central and a regular guest on *Celebrity Juice* – plays Dudley on Friday, May 18.

Popular comedians Joe Lycett, Jason Manford, Stewart Francis and Jim Davidson are also set to grace the stage at Dudley Town Hall later in the year with their latest

tour shows. Live music from M People's Heather Small on Tuesday, May 8 and legendary US vocal group The Drifters on Friday, May 25 is proving very popular with tickets selling quickly for both gigs.

Strictly Come Dancing favourite Pasha Kovalev lands at Dudley Town Hall on Saturday, May 19 with his brand new *The Magic of Hollywood* tour.

The former *Strictly* champion will be teaming up with his dance partner Anya Garnis for a night of sequins, glitz and glamour.

Upcoming children's events in Stourbridge include the unique Hoot Owl, Master of Disguise on Saturday, May 12. Original songs, colourful puppets, animation,



One-man show – David Baddiel

ridiculousness and rapid costume changes abound in this wildly inventive new show based on the award-winning picture book.

The latest season of live theatre broadcasts at Stourbridge Town Hall continues on Wednesday, April 11 with the RSC's production of *Macbeth*, starring Christopher Eccleston and Niamh Cusack.

Listings

Full listings and tickets for all shows can be found by visiting www.boroughhalls.co.uk or by calling the box office on 01384 812812.

You can also follow Dudley Borough Halls on Twitter @BoroughHalls and keep up-to-date on Facebook by visiting www.fb.me/BoroughHalls



Shappi Khorsandi appears on May 5

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Living in Dudley





Diddy Dinos is a story and sensory play session for pre-schoolers and takes place on April 27



Youngsters can get messy with free crafty drop-in sessions

Living in
Dudley

Easter fun at borough's museums

There's stacks to do at the Red House Glass Cone over the next few months.

It's a great place to take the family with free admission and parking, baby changing facilities and on-site Red Cone Coffee House.

There are free family trails available every day, suitable for the over 8s, including a Titanic trail which gets youngsters to look for Titanic-themed clues around the site.

There are drop-in Sticky Saturdays craft sessions, featuring free paper craft activities for ages four plus. Youngsters can come along with their family and have a go at being messy and getting sticky and the team tidies up! The drop-in craft activity runs on the following

Saturdays: April 21, May 19 and June 16 between 1.30pm to 3.30pm. Allow about 30 minutes for the activity.

There are free glass-blowing demonstrations every weekend in the hot glass studio. Visitors can watch as glass artists transform a molten piece of glass into a glass, vase, platter or object.

Demonstrations take place every weekend from 1.30pm to 3.30pm and daily during school holidays from 11am to 2.30pm.

There's a chance to make something in glass with a bookable session to make a fused glass emoji on Tuesday, April 3 and fused glass dinosaur on Thursday, April 12, costing £5 per

child. Sessions run at 10.30am, 11.30am, 1pm and 2pm.

Youngsters can make fused glass bunnies and chicks on Saturday, April 7. These sessions are bookable, cost £6 per child and run from 2pm to 2.45pm and 3pm to 3.45pm.

Activities

There are drop-in fusing sessions too, including on Saturday, April 7, between 11.30am and 1.30pm, with the chance to make a fused glass rainbow for just £3.

Over at Dudley Museum at the Archives there are a host of activities and events planned. Things kick off with Diddy Dinos on Friday,

April 27 from 10am to 11am and 11.30am to 12.30pm suitable for pre-schoolers. This bookable session costs £2.50 per child.

This is a story, sensory play and fun session for the under fours.

This stay and play session is suitable for ages 12months to four years and is designed for babies, toddlers and their carers to interact and play.

There's a free family trail on Wednesday, April 3 from 10am to 3pm around the museum.

There's also a family fun day on Wednesday, April 11 with a Dinosaur Day. Activities run from 10.30am to 3.30pm and cost £3.

● Dudley Museum @ The Archives is based

at Dudley Archives & Local History Centre, Tipton Road, Dudley, DY1 4SQ. Opening hours are 10am to 4pm, Monday to Saturday. Closed on Sundays.

● The Red House Glass Cone (RHGC) is based at High Street, Wordsley, DY8 4AZ. Opening hours are Monday to Friday, 10am to 3pm and Saturday and Sunday, between 11am and 4pm.

For further information call 01384 812381 or 01384 815571 or follow the museums service on Facebook @rehousecone or @dudleymuseum and on Twitter @glass_museum @redhousecone and @dudleymuseum

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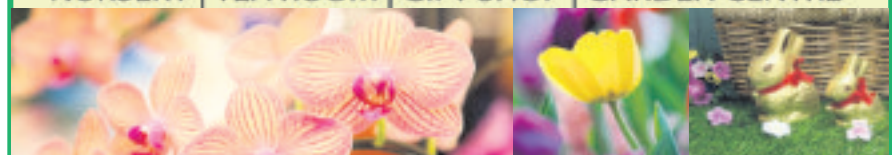
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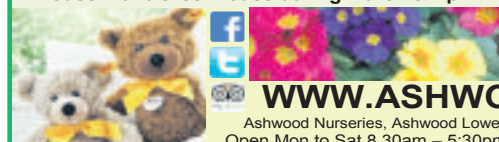
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Living in Dudley



A series of talks is taking place at Dudley Museum on the history of pieces from the collection and what we can learn from them



An industrial oil painting along a Stourbridge canal by Edwin Butler Bayliss

Talks reveal tales of town's treasures

A series of informal talks on the treasures of the Dudley Museum collection continues this month.

The Treasures of the Museum series takes visitors on a journey through one item from the collection each month.

They can find out about the history of a piece, the person who created or discovered an item, what it meant at the time and what we can learn from it today.

The most recent talk took place on March 21, which was led by Jane Fraser comparing an industrial oil painting along a Stourbridge

canal by Edwin Butler Bayliss with the beauty of 18th century red cut glasses produced in Stourbridge.

Edwin Butler Bayliss was a hugely important local artist, celebrated as one of the few 19th century painters of the industrial landscape.

The son of a local ironmaster, his inspiration came from the factories and mines of the Black Country, particularly the area around Bilston and Tipton close to the Hickman furnaces.

The piece on display at Dudley Museum looks along the Stourbridge Canal and reflects the area's glass-making history.

Jane related the smoky, industrial scene to the finished piece of ruby glass, whose Edwardian owners would have been far removed from the heaving industry and back-breaking work involved in creating such a piece of delicate beauty.

Collections

Jane returns on Wednesday, April 18 with a talk comparing two of the greatest treasures of the museum. These are a watercolour by J M W Turner showing a view of Dudley from the Tipton Canal and a glass cameo plaque entitled

'The Pearl Necklace'; made in Stourbridge by George Woodall. The talk contrasts the subject of the famous painting with the delicate cameo plaque.

Alan Lunt, strategic director for place, said: "This is a new offer from Dudley Museum in its new home at Dudley Archives. These sessions allow people to discover the stories behind the pieces in the collection."

"The museum also offers adult craft sessions and pottery classes, bringing a whole new dimension to the museum and a greater understanding of the collection."

Talks start at 10.30am, 11.30am and 12.30pm and are held in the education room. Each talk lasts approximately 30 minutes. There's no need to book, all sessions are drop-in.

While on site, visitors can look around the collection which includes geology, social history, glass, fine art and Dudley local heroes.

To find out more about the sessions or the range of activities for adults run by the museums service visit www.dudley.gov.uk/see-and-do/museums/dudley-museum-at-the-archives/treasures-of-the-museum/ or call 01384 815571.

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Limber up for annual walk

Living in
Dudley

23

Dudley Chronicle Thursday, March 29, 2018



The walk attracts more than 2,000 people

Walkers from across the country are getting ready for the 38th annual Dudley Trail.

The event, which attracts more than 2,000 people every year, will take place on Sunday, May 6 and promises to be bigger and better than ever before.

Walks of six, nine, 12, 20 and 28 miles are on offer, with routes covering the hidden beauty and proud industrial heritage of the borough.

Competition

This year will also see the introduction of a photo competition for both under 14s and adults with a chance to win tickets to Himley bonfire.

Participants can walk at their own pace and will take in the sights of canal towpaths, disused railway lines, country footpaths and a few roads as part of the walks.

All walks get under way from Dudley Leisure Centre at designated times between 8am and noon.

Councillor Dave Tyler, Mayor of Dudley, said: "The Dudley Trail is a popular event every year and people of all ages take part as



Join the 38th annual Dudley Trail on May 6 and help to raise money for a variety of good causes

individuals, groups or families and there is a great atmosphere on the day.

"Walking is one of the best ways to stay fit and active and I am sure people will turn out again this year to take up the challenge of one of the five distances on offer.

"This year people can book easier than ever by registering in advance online."

People can walk to raise money for a charity of their choice and there will be an opportunity

to make donations to the Mayor of Dudley's charities on the day.

Checkpoints are strategically placed along each of the five routes to ensure the well-being and whereabouts of walkers and light refreshments are available.

Everyone who completes a trail receives a certificate of achievement.

Online fees are £4 per person to join the 28 and 20-mile routes, £3 for the 12 and

nine-mile routes and £2.50 to walk the gentler six-mile route.

Costs will be an extra £1 for each route when booking on the day.

Information is available at www.himleyhallandpark.co.uk/dudleytrail or on facebook @HimleyHall

Hard copies of the entry form are available from the council's leisure centres and libraries or by calling 01384 817834.

Coffee lounge to open at hall

A new coffee lounge is set to open at Himley Hall in time for the Easter break.

The hall, which already offers pre-booked, indulgent afternoon teas on selected dates throughout the year, is branching out to offer a more informal dining experience to visitors to the hall and park.

The new Himley Lounge is set to open from April 7, serving a range of tea, coffees, light refreshments,

warming soups, jacket potatoes and a range of cakes.

The Himley Lounge will be housed in two of the larger rooms which look out onto the terrace and across the lawn into the grounds of the park.

Exhibitions planned for the rest of the year include Amor Lego from April 7 to September 30, an extraordinary exhibition of Star Wars-themed lego pieces. Two further exhibitions will be on display in the Oak Gallery from April 7 to Saturday, July 8. These are a 40-year retrospective of the painter Ron Satterthwaite and A Wildlife Wander around the World featuring a range of wildlife paintings by David Spencer.

Opening times will be 11am to 4pm, Wednesday to Sunday. Visit www.dudley.gov.uk/himleyhall or call Himley Hall on 01384 817817.



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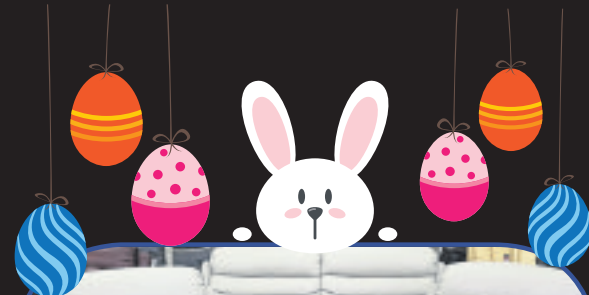
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Living in Dudley

Council team in training offer



The team at Dudley Council that provides training to its large and varied workforce is now offering courses and workshops to the general public.

The Training Team offers a range of Ofqual-regulated and nationally recognised qualifications including health and safety, emergency first aid and food safety in catering.

The one-day courses are delivered by experienced trainers and support people working in a variety of sectors including health and social care, manufacturing and catering.

The qualifications are regulated by Ofqual, the Government's standards agency, and can also be useful as part of a CV for people looking for work.

Courses are run every month at venues in the Dudley borough and currently all one-day courses cost £50 per person.

For further information contact the Training Team on 01384 816671 or 816672.

Waterfront move boosts firm

A growing business, which has more than tripled its office space in a recent move to premises on the Waterfront, is the latest firm to take up a DY5 enterprise zone tenancy.

Prosperity Wealth, an award-winning firm which offers independent financial advice, has this month moved into 12,000 sq ft office space in Quay House on the Waterfront.

It is the latest firm to relocate and reap the benefits of DY5, Dudley's Business and Innovation Enterprise Zone, which includes business rate relief for firms for five years, superfast broadband, a central location and improved transport links when the new Metro line opens.

The company, which offers advice on pensions, investments, mortgages, equity release and commercial finance, has more than quadrupled the number of financial advisors in the last 10 years from eight to 40 and also employs 18 members of staff to carry out administrative duties.

Successful

Alan Lunt, strategic director for place at Dudley Council, said: "The enterprise zone offers fantastic ready to move into office accommodation to suit any business and I'm delighted Prosperity Wealth has chosen DY5 as the location to continue the successful growth of their business."

"DY5 will support Prosperity Wealth and any other business that want to relocate."

"Together we can build a successful enterprise that breathes new life into the area and supports the growth of the local economy." Steve Davies, business development manager at Prosperity Wealth, said: "Across the team we have more than 400 years' combined experience in providing expert and tailored advice to our clients."

"We have built a successful business from our old premises in Stourbridge and we plan to build on what we have achieved in the last few years and maintain our reputation as one



Prosperity Wealth is one of the latest firms to make the move, taking on 12,000 sq ft office space in Quay House on the Waterfront

of the leading independent financial advisors in the area.

"We want to grow our business and are looking to more than double our workforce over the next ten years."

"This move to DY5 gives us the space we need to do just that as well as benefit from the significant opportunities the location provides." The enterprise zone will help to rejuvenate

the Waterfront office complex at Merry Hill and create additional office, technology and industrial space in the surrounding areas of Brierley Hill, Harts Hill and Pensnett.

Uplift

It is expected to deliver up to 7,000 new jobs and uplift the economy by £589million each year.

Businesses interested in relocating to DY5 can get in touch with the team by calling 01384 812001 or emailing info@dy5enterprisezone.co.uk

People can keep up-to-date by following @DY5enterprisezone on twitter or DY5 Enterprise Zone on LinkedIn.

To find out more about Prosperity Wealth go to www.prosperitywealth.com

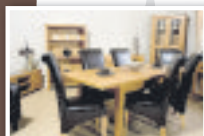
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New to Dudley town centre, Oakland Furnishings were formed by senior management with a lifetime experience in the furniture industry with the ambition to supply a top quality service and product to high street customers at a very competitive price.

A spokesman for the company said: "We import furniture from several countries around the globe to enable us to source and supply a good choice of furniture products that we feel will sell well in the competitive UK high street. We are continually sourcing new products to keep ahead of the

Commercial Feature

latest trends and to try and improve our pricing. We have primarily focused the business on the Oak dining furniture sector over the past few years after sourcing some very high quality designs at fantastic prices from key suppliers.

"Feedback from customers has been excellent so we adopted the 'If it ain't broke don't fix it mentality'."

"Oakland Furnishings' business model is built around innovative designs and great quality at a price far

cheaper than you would find on the high street or on any other furniture websites.

"The majority of the designs sold by Oakland Furnishings are designed in-house and manufactured by some of the finest furniture manufacturers in the world. Innovative furniture designs are a big factor in Oakland Furnishings recent growth and you won't find most of our products on other websites or on the high street."

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IT'S A TOTALLY WICKED MUSICAL

PAGE 2

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Witch way next for adventures in Oz?

Wicked, a spectacular West End and Broadway musical that tells the incredible untold story of the Witches of Oz returns to Birmingham Hippodrome on Wednesday.

Running until April 29, it features Amy Ross as Elphaba, Helen Woolf as Glinda, Aaron Sidwell (best known as 'Steven Beale' in EastEnders) as Fiyero, Steven Pinder (best known as 'Max Farnham' in Brookside) as The Wizard & Doctor Dillamond, Kim Ismay as Madame Morrible, Emily Shaw as Nessarose and Iddon Jones as Boq. Nikki Bentley is Standby for Elphaba.

Amy is thrilled to take the lead and says playing Elphaba is a dream come true.

"Well, we found out five or six months before starting rehearsals that we had the roles, so that was really a lovely amount of time to start singing the songs. Also just to build up a stamina, because once you're up and running you're doing eight shows a week. If you've already sung them into your voice and into the muscle, it makes it a lot easier once you're up and running."

It's the most challenging role that she's ever played because it stretches her both as a singer and an actress.

"As an acting role, Elphaba's journey that she goes through from start to finish is huge. You start the show hopeful, young, happy about this new university and things might be different here. And obviously, she goes through lots of hard times from start to finish and by the end is hardened by a lot of it. She's much darker by Act Two, so it does stretch you. But that's why I love it - because it is such a great challenge."

The show also brings with it enormous pressure because of the sheer number of people who go to see the show.

"Yes, I think you want to honour the wonderful, fantastically talented women who have played the role before. You want to live up to that and do it justice. So, that does add pressure but again it's something to embrace and it's a great challenge. It should never be easy."

"When I was training at college in musical theatre, Wicked had just come out on Broadway and it was this new show that everyone was listening to. We were all listening to the CD so before seeing it, I was already completely in love with it."

EXCITING

"The score is just epic and so exciting. It was wonderful to go and see it when it came to the West End and go 'Ah, that's why she does that in that song and how that happens. I don't think there are many musical theatre actresses who wouldn't want to play Elphaba'."

People connect strongly with the show and Ross puts plenty of effort into each performance. She spends 30 minutes getting on her green make-up and enjoys being on the road.

"I've got a husband and a cat that I will miss, but what's nice is that we kind of bed down in each place for a month, sometimes six weeks, so that makes it less tiring. I've done tours before where you change every week."

The show is already the 15th longest running show in West End theatre history and is now in its 12th year at London's Apollo Victoria Theatre, where it continues an open-ended

Casting a spell - Helen Woolf plays Glinda and Amy Ross Elphaba, pictured below



run. Around the world, Wicked has been seen by almost 55 million people in 16 countries and won over 100 major awards, including ten theatre-goer-voted WhatsOnStage Awards (winning 'Best West End Show' on three occasions) and two Olivier Audience Awards.

Based on the acclaimed, best-selling novel by Gregory Maguire that ingeniously re-imagines the stories and characters created by L. Frank Baum in 'The Wonderful Wizard of Oz', Wicked tells the incredible untold story of an unlikely but profound friendship between two sorcery students.

Their extraordinary adventures in Oz will ultimately see them fulfil their destinies as Glinda The Good and the Wicked Witch of the West. Acclaimed as 'a thrilling theatrical experience with brains, heart and courage', Wicked transports audiences to a stunningly re-imagined world of Oz, providing wonders beyond the imagination.

Wicked recounts the bond between two young women who first meet as sorcery students at Shiz University: the blonde and very popular Glinda and a misunderstood green girl named Elphaba.

Following an encounter with The Wizard, their friendship reaches a crossroads and their lives take very different paths. Glinda's unflinching

The score is just epic and so exciting

desire for popularity sees her seduced by power while Elphaba's determination to remain true to herself, and to those around her, will have unexpected and shocking consequences for her future.

Their extraordinary adventures in Oz will ultimately see them fulfil their destinies as Glinda The Good and the Wicked Witch of the West.

The show has music and lyrics by multi Grammy and Academy Award-winner Stephen Schwartz (Godspell, Disney's Pocahontas, The Hunchback of Notre Dame and Enchanted and, for DreamWorks, The Prince of Egypt) and is based on the novel 'Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West' by Gregory Maguire and adapted for the stage by Winnie Holzman (My So-Called Life). Musical staging is by Tony Award-winner Wayne Cilento and the production is directed by two-time Tony Award-winner Joe Mantello.

In London, the West End production premiered on September 27, 2006, and has played almost 5,000 performances at the Apollo Victoria Theatre. The multi record-breaking original Broadway production remains 'Broadway's biggest blockbuster' (The New York Times) after 14 years and almost 6,000 performances at the Gershwin Theatre, where it premiered on October 30, 2003.

● For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.

The Vaccines



Vaccines bounce back after band came to blows

The Vaccines are back with their fourth album, *Combat Sports*, and a gig in Birmingham as part of their spring UK tour.

The five-piece from London promise full-throttle rock and roll on *Combat Sports*, released tomorrow (Friday). Heralded by new single *I Can't Quit*, *Combat Sports* is described by the band as a return to their guitar band roots after a flirtation with pop.

By the time the band had ended their campaign for third album *English Graffiti* they were in a mess due to lifestyle and health issues and, crucially, being in a band had stopped being fun.

Despite English Graffiti getting glowing reviews and reaching no2 in the UK chart, the band were at their lowest ebb, maybe pondering the question posed by the title of their debut in 2011, *What Did You Expect from the Vaccines?*

"We lost sight of who we were and why we were there," says singer and guitarist Justin Young.

The 30-year-old originally from Hampshire explains that the band has survived upheaval, including the departure of drummer Pete Robertson.

"Being in a band is about compromise and collaboration. It's coming to terms with what we are as a collective and falling back in love with that and making the best record we can for us as a band, rather than as individuals."

The core trio, also featuring lead guitarist Freddie Cowan and bassist Arni Arnason, are now joined by drummer Yoann Intonti and keyboardist Tim Lanham.

The album's title was thought of after Young and Cowan came to blows on the last day of recording. "We're like brothers and brothers fight," says Young. "I don't see the title as a negative. On the contrary, to me it embodies survival, strength, commitment, glory, winning."

The Vaccines are in concert at the O2 Academy in Birmingham next Saturday, April 7.

Freddie is bowled over by a musical



When Freddie Flintoff retired from cricket, few people imagined that he would be performing in a musical.

It seems even he's slightly surprised to have landed a role in Kay Mellor's musical *Fat Friends*. He got the part after guest starring in an episode of the writer's recent TV drama series *Love, Lies and Records*, but admitted that he was initially a bit daunted at the

prospect of belting out a tune on stage. But the reviews have been very positive.

Freddie, pictured, will be taking to the stage alongside Atomic Kitten singer Natasha Hamilton, West End star Jodie Prenger, The X Factor winner Sam Bailey and Coronation Street's Kevin Kennedy.

The show has been written and directed by Kay Mellor, who after writing for *Coronation Street* and *Brookside* went on to create such

hit dramas as *Band of Gold*, *Playing the Field*, *A Passionate Woman*, *The Syndicate*, *In the Club* and, of course, *Fat Friends*.

The music is by Nick Lloyd Webber, son of Sir Andrew, who has created musical scores for film, TV and the stage, including the music for *Love Lies and Records*.

The tour arrives in Birmingham next week, at the New Alexandra Theatre from Tuesday to Saturday.

Mars rocks up for arena show

Thirty Seconds To Mars are at the city centre Arena Birmingham tonight (Thursday). The Los Angeles band fronted by rocker and movie star Jared Leto, pictured, have sold more than 15 million albums worldwide and release fifth studio album, *America*, in April.

Sam Smith is at the Genting Arena on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Embrace are back with seventh album, *Love Is A Basic Need*, 20 years on from their debut, and a gig at the O2 Institute in Digbeth next Thursday.



Sweet soul music and sounds like Sabbath

How Sweet It Is for soul fans with a Motown tribute show of that title at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre on Saturday and then a triple bill at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre on Sunday featuring those native New Yorkers Odyssey, Rose Royce's Gwen Dickey and Brum's own Jaki Graham. Meanwhile, the songs of John Fogerty will be heard at Bilston's Robin 2 tonight when tribute band Creedence Clearwater Review hit the stage. Tomorrow (Friday) Legend, the Bob Marley Experience, bring classic reggae to the Mount Pleasant venue. Also at The Robin, Kick Up The 80s play Saturday and the sounds of 'Madchester' will be aired by Stone Roses tribute Adored and Oasis tribute Definitely Maybe on Sunday. Forever Sabbath pay homage to Ozzy and co at the Robin on Wednesday.

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WOLVERHAMPTON
MAGAZINE

CHOICE



Andrew Scott

Hamlet (BBC2, 9pm)
The Almeida Theatre's 2017 acclaimed production of Shakespeare's play, recorded as-live in its West End transfer on the stage of London's Harold Pinter Theatre. Andrew Scott plays the Prince in Robert Icke's production, which features the original cast, and is directed for the screen by Rhodri Huw, also starring Jessica Brown Findlay, Angus Wright, Juliet Stevenson, Luke Thompson, Maanuv Thiara, Peter Wight, David Rintoul, Calum Finlay, Joshua Higgott, Marty Cruickshank, Madeline Appiah, Daniel Rabin, Matthew Wynn, Barry Aird, Mark Desebrock, Penelope McGhie and Nneka Okoye.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Classic Mary Berry. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Regional Programme. **2.00** MasterChef. (R) **2.30** MasterChef. (R) **3.00** Film: Shrek Forever After. (2010) Animated comedy, with the voice of Mike Myers. **4.25** Final Score. **5.15** A Question of Sport. (R) **5.45** Doodlebugs. **6.00** Ready or Not. New series. Comedy game show featuring unsuspecting members of the public who face surprise challenges while going about their daily lives. Paddy McGuinness provides the commentary. **6.30** BBC News. **6.40** Regional Programme. **6.45** Pointless Celebrities. A World Champions edition of the quiz, featuring Steve Davis, Sarah Ayton, Trina Gulliver, Eric Bristow, Kriss Akabusi, John Regis, Steve Collins and Jayne Torvill. **7.35** Who Dares Wins. Nick Knowles hosts the game show in which two pairs of complete strangers team up, each battling to outdo the other by listing as much as they know about a given subject. **8.20** Casualty. Glen and Robyn are both rushed to the ED, where he finally tells her the truth about his seizures. Bea grows concerned that Dylan's alcoholism may be affecting his judgement. **9.10** Troy: Fall of a City. King Priam takes his life into his hands to visit the Greek camp and Achilles. An agreement is reached, but the Greeks are furious – will the truce hold? Meanwhile, Xanthius' arrest puts increasing pressure on Helen, who faces a personal crisis as her relationship with Paris becomes strained. The penultimate episode of David Farr's Ancient Greek adventure, retelling the legend of the Trojan War from the perspective of a family at the heart of the conflict. Starring David Threlfall, David Gyasi, Bella Dayne and Louis Hunter. **10.10** BBC News; Weather.; National Lottery Update. **10.30** Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Everton v Manchester City at Goodison Park. **12.00** Film: Forget Me Not. (2011) **1.30** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.35** BBC News.

BBC2

6.10 The Wonder of Animals. (R) **6.40** Naomi's Nightmares of Nature. (R) **7.10** The Pets Factor. **7.30** The Designers. **8.00** Absolute Genius: Monster Builds. **8.30** Beyond Bionic. **9.00** Robot Wars. (R) **10.00** Gordon Buchanan: Elephant Family & Me. (R) **11.00** Six Puppies and Us. (R) **12.00** The Ladykillers: Pest Detectives. (R) **1.00** Film: Cromwell. (1970) Historical drama, starring Richard Harris and Alec Guinness. **3.15** Canterbury Cathedral. (R) **4.15** The Secret Helpers. (R) **5.15** Big Cats About the House. (R) **6.15** Easter from King's. A selection of music and Gospel readings for Holy Week and Easter, as part of a week of celebrations held at the Chapel of King's College, Cambridge. The King's College Choir, directed by Stephen Cleobury, sings a variety of popular seasonal choral verses, including Where You There?, Greater Love Hath No Man, Wash Me Thoroughly, The Angel Rolled the Stone Away and Worth is the Lamb. **7.30** Dad's Army. Sergeant Wilson inherits a title following the death of an elderly relative and joins the aristocracy – much to Mainwaring's annoyance. Classic comedy first aired in 1973, starring John Le Mesurier and Arthur Lowe. (R) **8.00** Attenborough's Wonder of Eggs. David Attenborough has a passion for birds' eggs, which protect the young from the outside world at the same time as allowing them to breathe and are strong enough to withstand the full weight of an incubating parent and weak enough to allow a chick to break free. In this documentary, the broadcaster reveals the secrets of birds' eggs from creation to hatching, exploring how they are made, the reasons behind their shape and their intrinsic purpose. **9.00** Hamlet. The Almeida Theatre's 2017 production of Shakespeare's play, starring Andrew Scott, and recorded as-live in its West End transfer on the stage of London's Harold Pinter Theatre. **12.15** Civilisations. (R) **1.15** Film: Therese Desqueyroux. (2012) An outspoken woman feels stifled in an unhappy marriage in 1920s France, and is driven to consider poisoning her husband. Drama, with Audrey Tautou. **3.00** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Super 4. (R) **7.00** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.05** Star Wars Freemarker Adventures. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: The Powerpuff Girls. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: The Bagel and Becky Show. (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Thunderbirds Are Go. **9.05** Scrambled!: Wishfart. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** James Martin's Saturday Morning. **11.25** Who's Doing the Dishes? (R) **12.25** ITV News; Weather. **12.30** The Harbour. (R) **1.00** Best Walks with a View with Julia Bradbury. (R) **1.30** Britain's Brightest Family. (R) **2.00** Celebrity Catchphrase. (R) **3.00** Tenable. (R) **4.00** Tipping Point. (R) **5.00** The Chase. (R) **6.15** Regional Programme; Weather. **6.30** New You've Been Framed! Harry Hill narrates a comical selection of mishaps filmed by viewers. **7.00** Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway. Stephen Merchant is on duty as the Star Guest Announcer, and Stephen Mulhern hits the streets of Warrington for the latest round of In for a Penny. Plus, Paloma Faith takes to the stage in the End of the Show Show and the Script are in the studio for Singalong Live. There will also be plenty of surprises as more Places on the Plane are given away, and another lucky player gets the chance to Win the Ads. Presented by Declan Donnelly. **8.30** The Voice UK. Emma Willis hosts the live semi-final of the singing contest, as the eight remaining contestants compete to win one of the four places in next week's grand finale. Only four acts can progress to the final and for the first time in the series, the decision of which acts will go through to the next round and which will be eliminated rests entirely with the votes of the viewing public. Members of Team Oily, Team JHud, Team Will and Team Tom look to move one step closer to winning a recording contract with Polydor Records. **10.00** ITV News; Weather. **10.15** Film: The Bourne Identity. (2002) Thriller, starring Matt Damon. **12.20** Goodwood Members Meeting Highlights. **1.10** Jackpot247. **3.00** Babushka. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.10 Marathon: Maraton del Meridiano. **6.40** Triathlon: Challenge Wanaka. **7.05** The King of Queens. (R) **7.30** The King of Queens. (R) **7.55** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.20** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.50** Frasier. (R) **9.20** Frasier. (R) **9.55** Frasier. (R) **10.25** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.55** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.20** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.50** The Simpsons. (R) **12.20** The Simpsons. (R) **12.50** The Simpsons. (R) **1.20** Come Dine with Me. (R) **2.20** Coast vs Country. (R) **3.25** A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. (R) **4.25** A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. (R) **5.30** The Secret Life of the Zoo. (R) **6.30** Channel 4 News. **7.00** Coastal Railways with Julie Walters. The actress travels from Newcastle to Edinburgh by high speed train. Along the way, she stops off at the coastal town of Alnmouth, discovers where the phrase Keep Calm and Carry On originated, visits the world's biggest gannet colony, and goes out to sea with a lobster breeder. When she reaches her destination, she discovers the connection between the railway and the famous Balmoral Hotel. (R) **8.00** Britain at Low Tide. In Fife, Tori Herridge explores a wreck close to the scene of one of Britain's worst railway disasters, and assesses the role it played in the rescue operation. A series of holes in rocks on the foreshore lead Tori and the archaeologists to the story of an industry that once dominated the local shoreline, and depended wholly on the power of the sea. She also examines stone carvings left in caves by one of Scotland's oldest tribes. Last in the series. **9.00** Film: Taken 3. (2014) Ex-CIA agent Bryan Mills' efforts to finally live a quiet life are shattered by the death of his ex-wife. Just when things seemingly can't get any worse, he is framed for her murder and must fight to clear his name. Action thriller sequel, starring Liam Neeson, Forest Whitaker and Maggie Grace. **11.10** Film: AVP: Alien vs Predator. (2004) Scientists are caught up in a battle between two races of deadly extraterrestrial creatures in a mysterious pyramid. Sci-fi thriller, starring Sanaa Lathan. **1.00** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. (R) **1.45** Hollyoaks. (R) **3.55** The Question Jury. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.10** Film: Gone with the Wind. (1939) **2.30** Film: Oklahoma! (1955) Rodgers and Hammerstein's musical Western, with Gordon MacRae. **4.00** 5 News Update. **4.05** Film: Oklahoma! (1955) Concluded. **5.15** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) **6.15** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away: Final Demand. Documentary giving an insight into the world of debt collection from the perspectives of people who owe money, their creditors and those who collect the payments. **7.00** Cruising with Jane McDonald. The singer returns to Naples in southern Italy, from where takes a ferry to Capri, an island famed for its rugged landscape, upmarket hotels – and shopping experience. Here, Jane wishes to fulfil an ambition she has had all her life – to follow in the footsteps of the English actress, singer and comedian Gracie Fields, once the biggest star in the UK, who spent the years leading to her death in 1979 living in the region. It proves to be a poignant journey that comes to rest at Gracie's graveside. (R) **8.00** Inside Windsor Castle. A look back at the series of events that shaped the monarchy between 1936 and 1952, using dramatic reconstructions and an extraordinary archive of film. Edward VIII's abdication in 1936 meant that his brother 'Bertie' became King George VI, and his eldest daughter Elizabeth was now suddenly and unexpectedly heir to the throne. When the Second World War broke out, Elizabeth and her sister Margaret moved into the safe haven that was Windsor Castle, which Elizabeth loved for its history and its heritage, while for Margaret it was one big adventure playground. (R) **8.55** 5 News Weekend. **9.00** Most Shocking Sexist TV of All Time. Through archive footage and talking heads, a look at how gender politics has played out on television from the 1960s to the present day. **10.30** 20 Moments That Rocked the 80s. Cherie Lunghi presents a countdown of memorable moments. (R) **12.05** SuperCasino. **3.10** Inside Manchester's Midland Hotel. (R) **4.00** The X-Files. (R) **4.45** House Doctor. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Lost Kingdoms of Central America **8.00** The Silk Road **9.00** Below the Surface **10.30** Top of the Pops: 1985 **11.30** The Highwaymen: Friends Till the End **12.25** The Highwaymen Live **2.25** Lost Kingdoms of Central America **3.25** Top of the Pops: 1985 **3.55** Sounds of the Seventies – Solo **4.00** Close
ITV2
11.55 Celebrity Catchphrase **12.55** You've Been Framed! Gold **1.55** Film: The Flintstones in Viva Rock Vegas (2000) **2.55** FYI Daily **3.00** Film: The Flintstones in Viva Rock Vegas (2000) **3.40** Film: Nanny McPhee (2005) **4.40** FYI Daily **4.45** Film: Nanny McPhee (2005) **5.45** Film: Mr Bean's Holiday (2007) **6.45** FYI Daily **6.50** Film: Mr Bean's Holiday (2007) **7.30** Film: Skyfall (2012) **8.35** FYI Daily **8.40** Film: Skyfall (2012) **10.15** Celebrity Juice: Easter Special **11.05** Family Guy **12.05** American Dad! **1.05** Action Team **1.35** Release the Hounds **2.35** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.45** Teleshopping **5.45** ITV2 Nightscreen
ITV3
12.20 Film: Carry On Cruising (1962) **2.05** Film: Carry On Up the Khyber (1968) **3.55** Carry On Forever **7.00** Midsomer Murders **11.00** Vera **1.00** Carry On Forever **2.00** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping
ITV4
12.25 The Big Fish Off **1.30** ITV Racing Live from Musselburgh. **4.00** Film: Dunkirk (1958) **5.10** FYI Daily **5.15** Film: Dunkirk (1958) **6.45** Film: Aces High (1976) **7.45** FYI Daily **7.50** Film: Aces High (1976) **9.00** Film: Lethal Weapon (1987) **10.05** FYI Daily **10.10** Film: Lethal Weapon (1987) **11.10** Film: Fire Down Below (1997) **12.10** FYI Daily **12.15** Film: Fire Down Below (1997) **1.20** River Monsters **2.20** The Protectors **E4**
1.00 Young Sheldon **1.30** The Big Bang Theory **4.00** The Great Celebrity Bake Off for Stand Up to Cancer **5.15** Extreme Cake Makers **6.00** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Film: The Watch (2012) **11.00** Gogglebox: **12.00** Naked Attraction **1.05** Five Star Hotel **4.00** How I Met Your Mother **4.45** Rude(ish) Tube
Film4
11.00 The Indian in the Cupboard (1995) **1.00** The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie (2004) **2.45** Robots (2005) **4.30** The Princess Diaries (2001) **6.45** Back to the Future (1985) **9.00** Conan the Barbarian (2011) **11.10** Veteran (2015) **1.40** Ninja III: The Domination (1984) **3.45** Close

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CHOICE



Bill Nighy

Ordeal by Innocence (BBC1, 9pm) New series. Three-part adaptation of Agatha Christie's novel, starring Bill Nighy. The former husband of a murdered heiress prepares to remarry 18 months after her adopted son was convicted of killing her, before dying himself in a prison brawl. However, the wedding preparations are disrupted by the arrival of a mysterious scientist who has returned from an expedition to the Arctic - and who claims to be able to prove the supposed murderer is innocent. Anthony Boyle, Anna Chancellor, Morven Christie, Crystal Clarke, Christian Cooke, Alice Eve, Matthew Goode, Ella Purnell, Eleanor Tomlinson, Luke Treadaway, Brian McCordie, Luke Murray, Hayden Robertson, Catriona Macnicoll and Abigail Conteh also star.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. 7.25 Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** Painting the Holy Land. **10.00** Easter Day From Sheffield Cathedral. **11.00** Urbi et Orbi. **11.25 Film:** The Silent Child. (2017) **11.45** Bargain Hunt. (R) **12.25** BBC News; Weather. **12.40 Film:** Shaun the Sheep Movie. (2015) Animation, featuring the voice of Justin Fletcher. **2.00** MasterChef. (R) **3.00** MasterChef. (R) **4.00** MasterChef. (R) **4.30** Escape to the Country. (R) **5.00** Songs of Praise. **5.35** BBC News. **5.50** Regional Programme. **6.00 The Big Painting Challenge.** New series. Mariella Frostrup and Rev Richard Coles present a third series of the art contest, which begins with 10 contestants getting a masterclass in still life in Glasgow. The painters must each depict an object they have brought with them from home, before visiting a distillery to produce a large scale painting of the stills and fermenters. The finished art is displayed to members of the public, who get the chance to vote for their favourite, before Judges Lachlan Goudie and Daphne Todd decide who will be the first to be eliminated. **7.00 Countryfile.** Matt Baker, Anita Rani and Joe Crowley explore West Yorkshire, meeting a beekeeper who came to the county as a refugee and discovering Emily Brontë's passion for wildlife. Including Weather for the Week Ahead. **8.00 The Generation Game.** Mel Giedroyc and Sue Perkins host the first of two special episodes reviving the classic game show in which teams of family members compete in bizarre challenges. **9.00 Ordeal by Innocence.** New series. Three-part adaptation of Agatha Christie's novel. As the widower of a murdered heiress prepares to remarry, the identity of his wife's killer is called into question. **10.00 BBC News.** **10.20 Regional Programme.** **10.30 Match of the Day 2.** Mark Chapman reviews the day's Premier League action, with highlights of Chelsea v Tottenham Hotspur at Stamford Bridge and Arsenal v Stoke City at the Emirates Stadium. **11.30 The Women's Football Show.** **12.05** Weather for the Week Ahead. **12.10** BBC News.

BBC2

6.20 Coast. (R) **6.50** Glorious Gardens from Above. (R) **7.35** Life in a Cottage Garden with Carol Klein. (R) **8.05** Gardeners' World. (R) **8.35** Countryfile. (R) **9.30** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.00** Spring Kitchen with Tom Kerridge. (R) **11.45** Lorraine Pascale: How to Be a Better Cook. (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** Coast. (R) **1.15** Pilgrimage: The Road to Santiago. (R) **2.15** Canterbury Cathedral. (R) **3.15** RAF at 100 with Ewan and Colin McGregor. (R) **4.45 Film:** War Horse. (2011) First World War drama, starring Jeremy Irvine. **7.00 Down the Mighty River with Steve Backshall.** In the conclusion of the two-part programme, the naturalist travels down the Ballem River's lower gorge, one of the most dangerous stretches of white water in the world surrounded by jagged rock walls. His exploration of the surrounding jungle leads to an encounter with a tribe that has had little contact with the outside world. As he concludes his trek in the river's coastal reaches, he faces a crisis of conscience as he witnesses a traditional crocodile hunt. (R) **8.00 Top Gear.** Matt LeBlanc, Chris Harris and Rory Reid test drive the latest SUVs through the medium of horse trialling, and are joined in the studio by Jason Manford. Plus, Chris takes an explosive drive in the new Alpine A110. Last in the series. **9.00 Conspiracy Files: Murder in Washington.** The murder of political campaigner Seth Rich during the 2016 US presidential campaign, which has become the subject of rumours that he had released internal e-mails to Wikileaks. **10.00 Mock the Week.** Ed Gamble, Milton Jones, Miles Jupp, Nish Kumar and Felicity Ward join host Dara O Briain and regular Hugh Dennis for the topical comedy show. (R) **10.35 Top Gear: Extra Gear.** The team try and solve Tokyo's transport problems, and are joined by racing drivers Enaam Ahmed and Chris Breen for a chat about the Monte Carlo Rally. Last in the series. **11.00 Film: Selma.** (2014) Fact-based drama, starring David Oyelowo. **1.00** Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R) **1.55** Holby City. (R) **2.55** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Super 4. (R) **7.00** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.05** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Teen Titans Go! (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Spy School. **9.05** Scrambled!: Adventure Time. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Love Your Garden. (R) **10.00** Countrywise. (R) **10.30** The Voice UK. (R) **12.00** Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway. (R) **1.30** ITV News; Weather. **1.40 Film:** Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory. (1971) Musical fantasy, with Gene Wilder. **3.45** Catchphrase. (R) **4.30** ITV News; Weather. **4.45** Regional Programme; Weather. **5.00** Tipping Point. (R) **6.00 The Chase: Celebrity Special.** TV presenters Fiona Bruce, Rick Edwards, Kate Humble and Joe Swash pit their general knowledge against a trivia expert as they try to win thousands of pounds for charity. However, they must work as a team to build their prize pot and stay one step ahead of the Chaser. Bradley Walsh hosts. (R) **7.00 Change Your Tune.** New series. Baz Ashmawy hosts the musical challenge in which some of the country's worst singers perform live, then undergo weeks of training to improve their voices, with the contestant who makes the most progress winning £10,000. The first episode features a teacher who wants to be good enough to join the school choir, an amateur actor who has stage presence but not musical skill, a care worker who wants to be able to sing at her daughter's wedding, a HGV driver who sings while driving around the country, and a music lover who has a hard time staying in tune. **8.00 The Durrells.** Larry and Louisa return to England, where Larry falls in with a group of Bohemian artists living in London, including writer Henry Miller. Back in Corfu, Gerry saves a donkey. **9.00 The Good Karma Hospital.** Gabriel joins Ruby on an outreach programme to a tea plantation. **10.00** ITV News; Weather. **10.15** Film: Sherlock Holmes. (2009) **12.40** Marcella. (R) **1.30** Jackpot247. **3.00** Take on the Twisters. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.15 The King of Queens. (R) **6.40** The King of Queens. (R) **7.05** The King of Queens. (R) **7.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.55** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast. (R) **1.35** The Simpsons. (R) **2.00** The Simpsons. (R) **2.30** The Simpsons. (R) **3.00** The Simpsons. (R) **3.30** Ice Age: The Great Egg-Scapade. (R) **4.00 Film:** Dumbo. (1941) Disney animated adventure, with the voice of Edward Brophy. **5.15** The Great Celebrity Bake Off for Stand Up to Cancer. (R) **6.30 Channel 4 News.** **7.00 Homes by the Med.** Charlie Luxton visits the Spanish island of Mallorca, where he discovers an Arab bath house that is over 1,000 years old in Palma's old town. (R) **8.00 Escape to the Chateau.** As Dick and Angel prepare for winter, they attend a food festival in Rouen, where they hope to find inspiration over what to do with their fresh fruit and vegetables. Angel adds the finishing touches to the floating geodesic dome in time for a family sleepover, while Dick gets to work fixing the crumbling stucco. Last in the series. **9.00 Homeland.** Carrie makes a move, Wellington has a reckoning and Saul expands an operation. Espionage drama, starring Claire Danes, Mandy Patinkin and Linus Roache. **10.05 Film: The Green Mile.** (1999) A prison guard amazed by the healing power and gentle nature of a man on death row comes to doubt his guilt. Supernatural drama, starring Tom Hanks and Michael Clarke Duncan. **1.25** The Supertet. Professor Noel Fitzpatrick and his team fight to save the leg of a much-loved golden retriever, and a French bulldog with twisted elbows needs a wheelchair and some surgery. (R) **2.20** Coastal Walks with My Dog. The first of two programmes in which celebrities and their canine companions showcase Britain's coastal beauty spots, beginning with trips in North Devon, Pembrokeshire and Dorset. (R) **3.15** KOTV Boxing Weekly. Action from two bouts featuring Reece Bellotti and Philip Bowes. **3.40** The Question Jury. An opinionated new juror arrives. (R) **4.35** George Clarke's Amazing Spaces. A school teacher building a classroom inside a salvaged plane. (R) **5.30** Streetmate. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Little Princess. **6.10** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.15** The Secret Life of Puppies. (R) **6.20** Moly. (R) **6.25** Simon. (R) **6.35** Simon. (R) **6.40** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.45** Oily the Little White Van. (R) **6.55** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **7.15** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.30** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **7.45** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.00** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **8.10** Digby Dragon. (R) **8.20** Peppa Pig. (R) **8.40** Peppa Pig. (R) **8.45** Thomas & Friends: Journey Beyond Sodor. (R) **10.05** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.35** Police Interceptors. (R) **11.40** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.40 Film:** Joe Kidd. (1972) Western, starring Clint Eastwood. **2.25 Film:** Space Cowboys. (2000) Adventure, starring Clint Eastwood. **4.55 Film:** Stargate. (1994) Sci-fi adventure, starring Kurt Russell. **5.55** 5 News Update. **6.00 Film: Stargate.** (1994) Concluded. **7.10 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away.** The officers try to recover £13,000 owed by a high-performance car dealer in Birmingham, and in Wolverhampton the agents chase nearly £2,000 owed to a car hire company. (R) **8.00 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away.** The agents chase up a £3,000 deposit owed by a landlord to his tenant, and officers try to recover £25,000 from a nightclub owner for unpaid solicitor fees. (R) **8.55 5 News Weekend.** **9.00 Film: Bruce Almighty.** (2003) God tires of a down-on-his-luck reporter's constant complaining, so passes on His powers to give him a taste of ultimate responsibility. The newsman falls in love with his extraordinary abilities - but a never-ending stream of incoming prayers and his ambitious attempt to please everyone soon prove there is more to the job than meets the eye. Comedy, starring Jim Carrey. **10.00 5 News Update.** **10.05 Film: Bruce Almighty.** (2003) Concluded. **11.05 Film: Just Go with It.** (2011) A plastic surgeon pretends to be going through a divorce and persuades his assistant to pose as his soon-to-be ex-wife. Romantic comedy, starring Adam Sandler. **1.15** SuperCasino. **3.10** Inside Manchester's Midland Hotel. (R) **4.00** The Railways That Built Britain with Chris Tarrant. (R) **4.45** House Doctor. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four **7.00** Only Connect **7.30** University Challenge **8.00** Painting the Holy Land **9.00** Timewatch: WWI Aces Falling **10.00** The Battle of Britain **11.40** Operation Jericho **12.40** Dancing in the Blitz: How World War Two Made British Ballet **1.40** Revolution and Romance: Musical Masters of the 19th Century **2.40** Timewatch: WWI Aces Falling **3.40** Close **ITV2** **12.15** The Voice UK **1.55** Britain's Got Talent: Top 10 Golden Buzzer **2.55** Film: Happy Feet Two (2011) **3.55** FYI Daily **4.00** Film: Happy Feet Two (2011) **4.50** Film: Hop (2011) **5.50** FYI Daily **5.55** Film: Hop (2011) **6.45** Film: Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (2005) **7.50** FYI Daily **7.55** Film: Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (2005) **9.00** Film: Spectre (2015) **10.10** FYI Daily **10.05** Film: Spectre (2015) **11.55** Family Guy **1.20** American Dad! **2.15** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.30** Teleshopping **ITV3** **11.10** Film: Carry On Cowboy (1966) **1.10** Film: Carry On Behind (1975) **3.10** Film: Carry On Camping (1968) **4.55** Midsomer Murders **6.55** Vera **9.00** Larry Grayson: Shut That Door (1977) **1.00** Blue Murder **2.30** Carry On Forever **4.10** Road to Avonlea **5.55** ITV3 Nightscreen **ITV4** **12.20** When English Football Ruled Europe **2.20** Stuck on You: The Football Sticker Story **3.25** Film: Police Academy 2: Their First Assignment (1985) **4.25** FYI Daily **4.30** Film: Police Academy 2: Their First Assignment (1985) **5.10** Goodwood Members Meeting **6.10** The Big Fish Off **7.15** Film: The Scorpion King (2002) **8.15** FYI Daily **8.20** Film: The Scorpion King (2002) **9.00** Film: Jaws (1975) **10.05** FYI Daily **10.10** Film: Jaws (1975) **11.25** Film: The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford (2007) **12.25** FYI Daily **12.30** Film: The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford (2007) **2.35** Football Rivalries **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen **E4** **12.25** Film: Dragonball Evolution (2009) **2.00** The Big Bang Theory **5.00** The Goldbergs **5.30** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **6.00** Young Sheldon **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **6.55** Film: Eragon (2006) **9.00** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **10.00** The Inbetweeners **11.05** The Big Bang Theory **12.00** Five Star Hotel **1.00** Five Star Hotel: The Finale **2.05** The Inbetweeners **2.35** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD

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FIVE MINUTES FROM MERRY HILL

FILM CHOICES

MONDAY

Z for Zachariah, BBC2, 10.30pm

A woman lives alone on a farm that belonged to her family in the aftermath of a nuclear apocalypse, believing herself to be the last survivor of the human race. Her simple life is disrupted by the appearance of a second survivor, and they adapt to working together - but the arrival of a third individual threatens everything they have built. Sci-fi drama based on Robert C O'Brien's novel, starring Margot Robbie, Chiwetel Ejiofor and Chris Pine. (2015)

TUESDAY

Sabotage, Channel 5, 10pm

The members of an elite Drug Enforcement Administration team secretly keep the millions of dollars they find during the raid. When they are killed off one by one, the leader becomes convinced one of his men is getting rid of the others to keep all the money, and sets out to expose the murderer. Action thriller, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger. (2014)



Hellboy II: The Golden Army, Friday, ITV, 10.45pm

WEDNESDAY

First Class Fear, Channel 5, 3.15pm

After being left at the altar, a woman has a brief affair with a handsome stranger on a plane, which ultimately puts her and everyone else on the flight in danger. Thriller, starring Lacey Chabert. (2013)

THURSDAY

3 Days to Kill, Channel 5, 11.05pm

A CIA agent learns he is dying, and decides to quit the agency so he can spend his last few months trying to rebuild his relationship with his estranged daughter. He is tempted to go back on his word when an old colleague offers him an experimental drug that could save his life - if he agrees to carry out one last mission. Action thriller, starring Kevin Costner. (2014)

FRIDAY

Hellboy II: The Golden Army, ITV, 10.45pm

The demon superhero, aided by a team from the Bureau of Paranormal Research and Defence, leads the fight against renegade elf Prince Nuada who is intent on reawakening an unstoppable robot army and bringing about the demise of mankind. Action fantasy sequel, starring Ron Perlman. (2008)

A group of famous faces live the dream in Nevada

Have you heard the one about the British showbiz legends trying to make it in Las Vegas?

This new five-part series follows famous faces from comedy, music and variety from the 1960s, 70s and 80s as they head to the Entertainment Capital of the World with a chance to fulfil the dream they thought had long gone.

The eight stars are double act Cannon & Ball, entertainer Bernie Clifton, comedian Mick Miller, pianist and entertainer Bobby Crush, singer Kenny Lynch, 60s pop idol Jess Conrad, actress and singer Anita Harris and Hi-de-Hi! actress Su Pollard.

Cameras follow the group from their departure from the UK to the moment they step onto the stage in Sin City. They'll live in a house together, explore and enjoy the Vegas Strip and rehearse and reminisce together.

Viewers will also be given an insight into the legends' vast and varied careers as they look back and talk about their incredible lives.

The culmination will be an hour-long special of their variety performance at a world-famous theatre in the Nevada desert. Despite decades of experience in the industry, Vegas is an eye-opener.

"I suppose the equivalent in England is Blackpool - that is the Vegas of England, but there's nothing like Vegas," Jess explains.

"We played in a beautiful theatre called the Orleans theatre. And to get there you had to go through a mile of slot machines and Kenny Lynch and I were sitting at one of the machines. Then a lady of a certain age came over and said, 'You're in my seat'.

"I said, 'I'm in your seat?' She said 'Yes, I've been sitting on that seat for 50 years'.

"And then I realised, of course, that she probably comes every day and the place was full of women of about 50 gambling on these slot machines."

Another aspect that the celebs found bizarre was being part of a reality show.

"It's a new art form, I suppose," Jess says.

"We're wired up all day, from eight in the morning to ten at night and they say, 'Be careful what you say', but if you don't say anything you don't get any viewing time.

"We were a great group and nobody fell out. It was a real happy family."

The man tasked with taking the veteran stars under his wing is legendary producer Frank Marino.

"He's the most fabulous man," Su says. "He's Mr Showbiz. He just came straight in there, looking marvellous, he had a fantastic jacket on, sparkly, and his hair if gorgeous. He's very handsome, I'd have him in my house anytime."

There was another unexpected development for the stars while they were in Vegas - the mass shooting at Mandalay Bay.

"It was really horrendous," Jess admits. "Because everyone was so devastated, we all kind of decided that the show must go on."



Last Laugh in Vegas, Tuesday, ITV, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

signature, followed by a test of their pie-making abilities for the technical, and then a showstopper cake challenge that may see dreams may turn to nightmares. These brave celebrities are all baring their bakes to raise money for Stand Up To Cancer - and to encourage viewers to do the same.

WEDNESDAY

Commonwealth Games 2018: The Games Today

BBC2, 7pm

Highlights of the opening ceremony at Carrara Stadium in the city of Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia, as the 21st staging of the Games was officially declared open. The Games were last held in Australia at Melbourne 2006, and Gold Coast overcame Hambantota, Sri Lanka in the bidding process back in November 2011 to win the right to host this event. At the heart of this ceremony was the traditional Parade of Nations, the Competitors' Oath and the finale of the Queen's Baton Relay.

THURSDAY

Big Cats About the House

BBC2, 8pm

Documentary following the work



Commonwealth Games 2018: The Games Today, Wednesday, BBC2, 7pm

Not Going Out

BBC1, 9pm

Lee Mack and Sally Bretton star in the domestic comedy which sees the couple appear to go from one disaster to the next, while coping with their three kids, Lucy's disapproving parents, Lee's feckless dad Frank and their world-weary friends Toby and Anna. This week the couple become addicted to a TV boxset, causing them to cancel dinner

with Toby and Anna at the last moment. But when they lie about the reason, it only succeeds in opening up a huge can of worms.

FRIDAY

Sounds Like Friday Night

BBC1, 7.30pm

New series. Greg James and Dotty for live music and interviews, direct from Television Centre in west London's White City. Synth-pop group Years and Years and rock band Snow Patrol both perform their new singles for the first time on live television, while American pop superstar Meghan Trainor also graces the show. Dotty will be heading head out and about, interviewing major stars wherever they are in the world - over the course of the series, she'll be chatting to the likes of Little Mix and Gary Barlow.

I Don't Like Mondays

Channel 4, 8pm

New series. Comedy game show, hosted by Alan Carr, in which everyone in the audience arrives with their resignation letter in hand and, with the help of a celebrity guest, Alan whittles participants down to the lucky chosen one via hilarious games, surprise guests, a celebrity executive board and the novel use of a filing cabinet.

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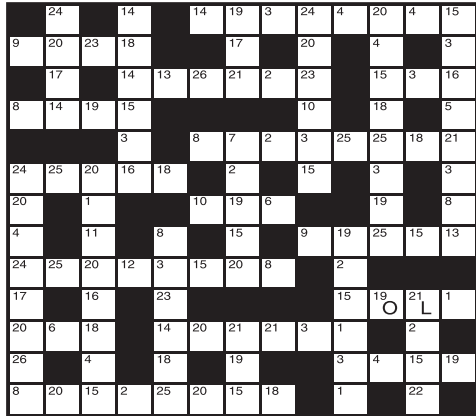
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BRAIN GYM

No.473

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	M	2	K	3	Z	4	Y	5	G	6	U	7	C	8	H	9	F	10	O	11	D	12	T	13	J
14	W	15	E	16	R	17	S	18	L	19	N	20	I	21	P	22	V	23	B	24	Q	25	X	26	A

1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19 O
7	20
8	21 L
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

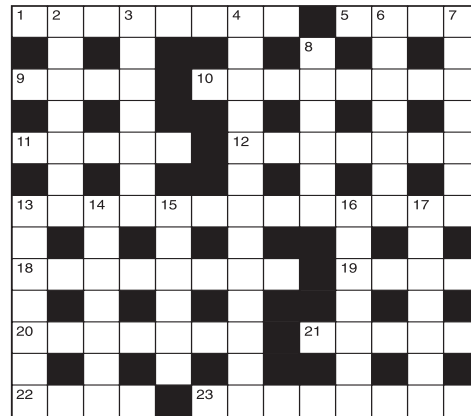
Cryptic Clues:

Across

- Words in action? (8)
- Bring in a number to help - sharpish! (4)
- Woeful cry from a girl, we hear (4)
- False encouragement given on debts (8)
- Dog that is scientifically famous (5)
- Accident-prone tourist? (7)
- Soldier-husbands who try to supply all one's needs (7,6)
- Accrued the sailor having found the right answer (8)
- He won't go out with his mates (4)
- Walked back around a man sleeping (7)
- Case that may be looked into (5)
- Title of pantomime? (4)
- Bearing gifts we hear, vaguely (8)

Down

- Its meals are usually late (7)
- Don't approve but is liked somehow (7)
- I, for one! (7,6)
- Downfall of a barber? (7)
- Wastes the rewards (7)
- A model employer (6)
- Given protection, being cautious (7)
- Rum's not what the cure's made of (7)
- Put in charge again (6)
- Make watchful remarks? (7)
- Salt and ice in flexible combination (7)



Quick Clues:

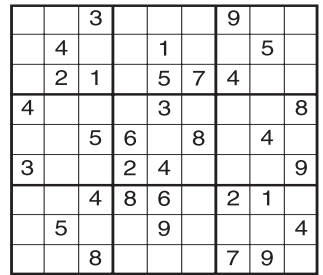
Across

- Dusk (8)
- Sell (4)
- Region (4)
- Encumbrance (8)
- Foolish (5)
- Function (7)
- Execution order (5,8)
- Kingdom (8)
- Bucket (4)
- Ease (7)
- Exclude (5)
- Sward (4)
- Helped (8)

Down

- Belligerent (7)
- Handbill (7)
- Somersaulting (4,4,5)
- Fetter (7)
- Reduce (7)
- Coming (6)
- Fault (7)
- Ring-like (7)
- Listen (6)
- Utter (7)
- Weather (7)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

1	7	2	9	3	8	6	5	4
5	9	4	2	6	7	3	1	8
8	3	6	1	4	5	7	2	9
7	4	1	5	9	2	8	6	3
3	6	9	4	8	1	2	7	5
2	8	5	6	7	3	9	4	1
6	1	8	3	2	7	5	9	7
9	5	7	8	1	6	4	3	2
4	2	3	7	5	9	1	8	6

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Bad egg; 4 Treble; 9 Fruitless task; 10 Enlist; 11 Totem; 12 Ambit; 14 Demur; 18 Heaps; 19 Sternum; 21 Philosophical; 22 Lagged; 23 Crisis. Down: 1 Buffet; 2 Double meaning; 3 Gates; 5 Rosette; 6 Blast furnaces; 7 Eskimo; 8 Cease; 13 In store; 15 Chapel; 16 Estop; 17 Smalls; 20 Ether. QUICK - Across: 1 Remote; 4 Plomb; 9 Disinterested; 10 Cholera; 11 Singe; 12 Acid; 14 Adder; 18 Ropes; 19 Heather; 21 Going for a song; 22 Denote; 23 Chaste. Down: 1 Reduce; 2 Misconception; 3 Tense; 5 Pleased; 6 On tenterhooks; 7 Badger; 8 Delay; 13 In sight; 15 Frigid; 16 Throw; 17 Brogue; 20 Abash.

Quiz

- Which artist painted the ceiling of the Banqueting House in Whitehall?
- Which golfer was noted for wearing all-black outfits?
- Which island includes New York boroughs Queens and Brooklyn?
- Who wrote A Brief History of Time, published in 1988?
- Which present-day city was the capital of the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires?
- Which organs are affected by asbestosis?
- Which author was married to Jonathan Dimbleby?
- To which country do the Stewart and Chatham Islands belong?
- Who did Steve McClaren succeed as manager of Middlesbrough football club?
- What type of animal is a capuchin?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Evelyn Waugh; 2 Staffa; 3 George Peppard; 4 Farthing; 5 Queen's Champion; 6 Thelonius Monk; 7 Zagreb; 8 Max Von Sydow; 9 Punjab; 10 Jeremy Paxman.

Niner: EDUCATION

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

62873
6284578
215239

gives a home,
gives another home,
gives a home for animals.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

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Bank Holiday - 10.00am - 5.00pm

Head for the hills in Cyprus – to relax

BETWEEN shadows on the water from the overhanging boughs of mature trees, I can see glimpses of my prey, lazily swimming in the deepest stretch of the stream.

The only thing disturbing this tranquil idyll is the excited shrieking of one of my companions, who's just landed her first ever fish.

As she hauls in a glistening trout, I'm filled with admiration and a bit envious of her luck, but as I half abandon my fishing rod to take a photo of her prize, it starts to twitch and then violently shake. I try to remember my instructions and pull the line through the water before dragging a monster of a fish up to the surface triumphantly.

TRANQUIL

A couple of hours later my prize is served up to me. It's been seasoned, simply grilled and dressed with a garlic sauce and local vegetables.

Casale Panayiotis, tucked away in a tranquil valley in the northern Troodos mountains, is a rare find – a boutique hotel that encourages guests to celebrate its past and immerse themselves in local culture.

It's the brainchild of business mogul John Papadouris, who was born and raised in the rural mountain village of Kalopanayiotis, before moving on to London and the Middle East to make his fortune in the engineering industry.

When he returned to his home country decades later, he found a sad state of affairs. The division of Cyprus following the Turkish invasion in 1974 and an exodus of adults from the remote Troodos area to work in bigger towns and cities, had left Kalopanayiotis a shell of a village. Most houses were empty and derelict, just a tiny population of elderly people remained; the village lacked even a cafe.

Rest and relaxation – take a dip in the pool



So Papadouris decided to restore Kalopanayiotis to its former glory – but with a 21st century twist. He used his own money and European funding to improve infrastructure, build paths and lighting, encourage locals to build their own businesses and, most ambitiously, create a luxury hotel integrated into the heart of the village.

There are now 43 individual rooms scattered through the hillside community and three top-notch restaurants – not to mention a world-class spa which reflects the ancient spa village's history.

Cyprus thrills – the view from Casale Panayiotis



For thousands of years, pilgrims and hunters have been drawn to the valley for the nearby sulphur springs, bathing in its healing waters. Traditionalists can opt for bath rituals like the 'Theouha', an immune-boosting soak in healing water or the 'Goat Milk and Rose Ceremony' while romantics might prefer a couple's ritual in a private treatment suite, complete with sparkling wine and fresh fruit.

Casale offers experiences for everyone from foodies to adventure seekers, and newly revitalised, I'm ready to learn the ways of traditional Cypriot life. I throw

myself into learning how to make classic Cypriot cheese halloumi and pay a visit to the nearby Tsiakkas Winery.

History is entwined with modern life in every aspect of Cypriot culture, and that becomes abundantly clear after a short stroll around Kalopanayiotis. One of the 14 villages of the mountainous Marathasa area, it's home to the Saint John Lampadistis monastery, a Unesco World Heritage site.

Casale Panayiotis is the perfect antidote to the stress and pollution of modern life. The perfect way to relax

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Landmark home is imposing and much improved

A landmark property, Greenlea, 30 Vale Street in Upper Gornal, is an imposing and spacious detached residence on a fine corner plot, offering significant further potential.

New to the property market, it is for sale through Taylors at £285,000.

Its accommodation briefly comprises an entrance porch, a reception hall, a store, a lounge with a bay window, a dining room, an upgraded kitchen, a walk-in pantry, a utility room, a wet/shower room, a galleried landing, three generous bedrooms (all with wardrobes) and a bathroom.

There is also extensive parking to the front, and a sheltered rear garden orientated to the southwest.

In more detail this property is built to an attractive and spacious design in red brick.

The lounge is carpeted and features a bay window and a small side window, plus a feature fireplace, a ceiling rose, cornicing and a dado rail.

The kitchen is of a good size, with modern white units, wood-block-effect working surfaces, a recess for a range-style cooker, a display cabinet and splash-back tiling.

A return staircase with mahogany varnished spindles and a deep window leads to the first floor.

Built-in storage features in the bedroom accommodation.

The family bathroom also has fitted furniture, is fully tiled and includes a bath with a shower screen.

The rear garden is an excellent size, featuring a good expanse of mature lawn, two good sized block paved terraces and is bordered by brick walling and fencing.

Gornal is a suburban area in the Dudley Metropolitan Borough, in the West Midlands. It encompasses three villages, these being Upper Gornal, Lower Gornal, and Gornal Wood.

UPPER GORNAL £285,000



TO VIEW THIS PROPERTY

AGENT: Taylors Estate Agents

TEL: 01902 880888

EMAIL: sedgley@taylors-estateagents.co.uk

KEY FEATURES

Landmark detached
Fine corner plot
Further potential
Upgraded kitchen
3 generous bedrooms



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CGI of The Allington 2 bedroom home at Woodlands. Photographs of typical Kier Living showhome interiors. Elevations and finishes may vary. *Carpets available on selected plots subject to terms and conditions. **Help to buy available upon request subject to terms and conditions.

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Dudley Chronicle
Thursday, March 29, 2018



SEDGLEY, Gospel End Street

An imposing, **SIGNIFICANTLY EXTENDED**, spacious, family home with panoramic **DISTANT VIEWS** within walking distance of Sedgley's Bull Ring built in 1960 to a first quality specification comprising: reception hall, lounge with bay, dining room, enlarged/refitted kitchen, pantry, utility room, fitted cloakroom, **FOUR GENEROUS BEDROOMS** (one with en suite), upgraded bathroom. Garage, neat gardens. EPC: TBA SEDGLEY



LOWER GORNAL, Irving Close, Straits

NO UPWARD CHAIN. Located on quiet cul-de-sac location in the sought after area of the Straits' in Lower Gornal, this well proportioned semi detached dormer style bungalow which has been extended & much improved. As well as having gas central heating and double glazing this **THREE BEDROOM** also boasts: porch, hallway, kitchen-diner, extended lounge, bathroom. Garage, utility room, enclosed rear garden, car port with drive, garden to front. EPC: TBA SEDGLEY.



UPPER GORNAL, Homestead Close

Superbly presented semi-detached property situated within walking distance of local amenities including bus stops and local shopping precinct consisting of gas central heating and double glazing. This ideal starter home also has porch, living room, kitchen-diner, **TWO BEDROOMS**, bathroom, garden. Ample parking to front. **VIEWING IS ESSENTIAL.** EPC: TBA SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of **£300,000**

Offers in the region of **£229,950**

Offers in the region of **£139,950**



WOMBOURNE, Walk Lane

A **SUBSTANTIAL TRADITIONAL SEMI DETACHED FAMILY HOME** which is superbly located within walking distance from village shops, enjoying a **VERY LARGE and SECLUDED REAR GARDEN**. Offering a **LARGE THREE BEDROOM** layout. Set beyond the **DRIVEWAY** with gates to **DETACHED GARAGE**. EPC TBA

WOMBOURNE, Van Diemens Road

This **EXTENDED SEMI-DETACHED FAMILY HOUSE** is **BEAUTIFULLY APPOINTED** throughout, and with **LAWN and TREES OPPOSITE** including: Porch, Hall, **LOUNGE**, Dining area with Kitchen, Three bedrooms and Bathroom. **DRIVE, GARAGE and SECLUDED GARDEN**. EPC D



LOWER GORNAL, The Alley

Situated on corner position in the popular area of Lower Gornal this **DETACHED** property is within walking distance of Gornal Village. As well as having gas central heating & double glazing this family home also boasts: hall, living room, dining room, fitted-kitchen, **THREE BEDROOMS**, stunning shower room, detached garage, greenhouse, gardens and parking for multiple vehicles. **VIEWING ESSENTIAL.** EPC: D SEDGLEY



LOWER GORNAL, The Straits

SPACIOUS, gas centrally heated, double glazed detached constructed in the 1970's to replicate a 'cottage' which formally occupied this site with **GOOD DISTANT VIEWS** & within walking distance of the village comprising 22'2" lounge (with brick fireplace incorporating old beam), 15ft dining kitchen, store, original cellar, side lobby. Three bedrooms, bathroom, Large garage/workshop, extensive parking, garden. EPC:E SEDGLEY



SEDGLEY, Southerndown Road, Brownswall estate

NO UPWARD CHAIN. Enviously located on the much sought after Brownswall Estate, this well maintained Bungalow has much to offer. Occupying a corner position, and having gas central heating & double glazing, this fabulous property boasts entrance porch, hallway, living room, **TWO BEDROOMS**, attractive fitted kitchen, sun room, bathroom, detached garage, lovely garden with driveway to front. EPC:D SEDGLEY.

No upward chain **£249,950**

£234,950

Offers in the region of **£234,950**

New price **WAS £230,000, NOW £210,000**

Offers in the region of **£209,950**



LOWER GORNAL, Cotwall End Road, Straits

ENVIABLY SITUATED OPPOSITE OPEN SPACE - Significantly **EXTENDED** gas centrally heated (combi boiler)& double glazed semi detached within walking distance of so many day to day amenities/schools etc and offering further potential comprising: entrance vestibule, reception hall, extended 15ft lounge, dining room, kitchen, three generous bedrooms (all with wardrobes/cupboards), bathroom, double garage, delightful sheltered level rear garden. EPC:D SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of **£190,000**



KINGSWINFORD, Sycamore Road

A **STUNNING & BEAUTIFULLY REFURBISHED SEMI DETACHED HOUSE** which enjoys a sought after location, offering an **EXPENSIVELY RE APPOINTED, REDECORATED and GENEROUS** layout which includes **TWO LARGE DOUBLE BEDROOMS** plus **NEW DRIVEWAY** and a **GENEROUS GARDEN**. EPC D

No upward chain **£169,950**



DUDLEY, Himley Avenue

Spacious **ENLARGED** modernised and conscientiously maintained gas centrally heated UPVC double glazed semi detached in quiet 'backwater' representing a fine family home and comprising entrance porch, reception hall, lounge, kitchen, store, separate dining room, substantial utility room; three generous bedrooms, bathroom, good size garage **LARGE** sheltered rear garden. EPC: TBA SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of **£160,000**



DUDLEY, Ripley Grove

Meticulously maintained, Freehold, gas centrally heated, double glazed intermediate 'starter home' with superb distant views at head of cul-de-sac briefly comprising: hall, fitted cloakroom, kitchen with range of high gloss cream finish units & integrated appliances, living/dining room (with double French doors out to the garden), store. Two double bedrooms (one with double wardrobes), shower room (potential bathroom). Delightful rear garden, parking. EPC C. SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of **£147,000**



DUDLEY, Old Park Road

An **EXTENDED** conscientiously maintained UPVC double glazed and gas centrally heated (combi boiler) semi detached offering further potential comprising porch, reception hall, lounge with bay, pantry, extended rear living room, extended kitchen and a wet room beyond (with potential), three bedrooms, bathroom, lengthy garden. EPC Rating E SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of **£144,950**



COSELEY, Mount Pleasant Street

OUTSTANDING! - Tremendously modernised and improved gas centrally heated UPVC double glazed and recently re-roofed and extensive re-plastering traditional terrace of character comprising entrance hallway, lounge, lobby, dining room, kitchen, bathroom, **THREE BEDROOMS**, sheltered garden. EPC D SEDGLEY.

New price **WAS £130,000, NOW £125,000**



Dudley, 153 Green Park Road

WELL PROPORTIONED & ATTRACTIVELY PRESENTED, SEMI-DETACHED HOME comprises: Hall, Lovely Sitting Room, Breakfast Kitchen, Guests W.C. Two Bedrooms, House Bathroom, **GOOD SIZED DRIVEWAY**, Beautiful Astro Turf Garden. ●●VIEW EARLY●● EPC:

£124,950



Netherton, 51 Gill Street

This **CHARMING, PERIOD STYLE, TERRACE HOUSE** oozes **CHARACTER** & comprises: Two Spacious Reception Rooms, **MODERN RE-FITTED KITCHEN** with Integrated Appliances, Two Large Bedrooms, Well Appointed House Bathroom, Cellar & Private Garden. EPC:

£119,950



TIPTON, 107 Thunderbolt Way, DY4 9SG

PUBLIC NOTICE
We are acting in the sale of the above property and have received an offer of **£68,000**. Any interested parties must submit any higher offers in writing to the selling agent before exchange of contracts takes place. EPC:D SEDGLEY OFFICE 01902 880888
Located within walking distance of many amenities a smart double glazed 2 bedroom **GROUND FLOOR** flat.



WOLVERHAMPTON, Sutton Court, Ettingshall Park

NO UPWARD CHAIN. Recently refurbished, superbly presented **FIRST FLOOR** apartment being an ideal bungalow alternative, first step on the property ladder or even investment opportunity and briefly comprising: hall, living room, re-fitted kitchen, bathroom with separate W/C, double glazing. EPC: TBA SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of **£64,950**

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Volvo's XC40 set to crack compact SUV market

By John Griffiths

Volvo describes its latest model, XC40, as a 'small' or compact SUV.

But size is relative: it may be smaller than its siblings, the XC60 and XC90 SUVs but it certainly isn't 'small' – it has a real presence on the road and it's already making an impact in the motoring world that belies its stature.

It has already been named European Car of the Year at the Geneva Motor Show, as well as winning the UK Car of the year title from What Car? Magazine.

The first models are powered by 2.0 litre engines – a diesel for the economy-minded and a petrol which virtually creates a new GT category in the burgeoning SUV market, by far the fastest growing area of car sales.

Coming soon there's a brand new three-cylinder, 1,500cc petrol engine which will no doubt prove popular with private buyers, and this will later be mated with an electric motor to create the tax-efficient XC40 hybrid. A pure electric version is also planned.

Premium

Prices are competitive, starting at £28,750 and rising to £37,050, although there are two high-spec, exclusive 'first edition' versions (petrol and diesel) with all-wheel drive and the most powerful petrol and diesel engines, which top the sheet at more than £39,000.

The XC40 is undoubtedly in the 'premium' class, sharing technology, comfort and safety features with the upmarket S/V60 and 90 models, and is the first Volvo to be built on a brand new platform.

Its launch comes after a record 2017 for sales and profits for the Swedish company, with 2018 already on track for even better performance. And that's before the XC40 sales start to roll in, as they will as a car with all the credentials to crack the compact SUV market and take sales from the likes of the Range Rover Evoque, Mercedes GLA and BMW X1.

Early orders across Europe and the United States are double what even Volvo expected – around 20,000 so far – and the XC40 has yet to be unveiled in the lucrative Chinese market.

It's not hard to see why. While it's in the premium price bracket, XC40 owners will lose little (except a bit of space) compared to the larger XC60 and 90, as most of the technical and comfort features have transferred to the new model. It will seat five adults (the SUV styling means generous headroom, as well as legroom) in the back, and the practical



Comfortable, capable, safe and innovative the XC40 deserves its awards and initial sales show that motorists are convinced, too

boot has from 588 to 1,338 litres of space, depending on whether the rear seats are folded up or down. There are a lot of innovative storage solutions around the cabin, too.

Both test cars were 'R-Design' trim, the sporty-themed specification which includes lashings of leather with metallic trim features. The cabin is kept tidy and simplistic with the centre colour touch screen, steering wheel remote controls and a driver-configurable 12.3 inch digital instrument panel.

The driving position is high, for good all-round visibility and to allow for 211mm of ground clearance for those venturing off road – skid plates are standard front and rear, too.

Both test cars, even in 4WD configuration, ride the road smoothly while handling is light and agile – the petrol model seems to have a slight edge here. The XC40 shows little in the way of body roll despite its height, which is important in comfort and stability terms.

The 2.0 litre diesel is a real smoothy, particularly in the D4 190bhp version fitted to four wheel drive models (it's D3, or 150bhp in

front wheel drive cars). The test car, with a slick eight speed auto transmission, was lively with a 0 to 62mph sprint time of under eight seconds. Yet it is also capable (on official figures) of almost 50mpg with a CO2 rating of 133g/km. My test saw 42mpg on the trip computer.

Lured

But, with diesel's future uncertain, some buyers will no doubt be lured by the thirstier petrol engine with an impressive 250bhp and 350Nm of torque from a low 1,800rpm.

It brings GT motoring to the SUV world, with the 0 to 62mph sprint in 6.5 seconds and blistering mid-range acceleration for quick overtakes.

Its official fuel average is 39.8mpg (l managed 32) with a CO2 rating of 166g/km.

The car's handling is well up to its performance potential, feeling light, agile and sure-footed through the twisty bits.

The First Edition test cars were in top specification but XC40s come with features developed on Volvo's flagship models

including 'pilot assist', an advanced form of adaptive cruise control. Volvo's 'city safety' and rear crossing traffic system are both standard, providing warnings of pedestrians, cyclists and even animals and, if necessary, braking automatically to prevent a collision. Driver alert with lane keeping aid, road sign reader, oncoming lane mitigation (to avoid a head-on crash) and run-off road mitigation are also standard as, of course, are multiple airbags.

Actual specifications vary according to trim level, but the R-Design test cars also came with leather upholstery, electric windows and mirrors, satnav, a hands-free electric tailgate, sports pedals and mats, rear reading lights, tinted windows, power-operated and heated front seats.

As well as the principal trim levels, buyers can also opt for higher spec 'Pro' versions, which add extra equipment via a range of option packs.

Comfortable, capable, safe and innovative the XC40 deserves its awards and initial sales show that motorists are convinced, too.

Striking pick-up from Mitsubishi's special division



What a looker

Mitsubishi has lifted the lid on its latest Special Vehicle Projects model – the L200 Barbarian SVP II.

Following on from the original and hugely successful SVP, this model has significant updates to the interior and exterior.

The outside of the 4x4 now receives 17-inch black and orange alloy wheels in BF Goodrich all-terrain tyres, which are surrounded by wheel arch extensions.

The fog lamp rings, door handle recess covers and puddle lamps are finished in a distinctive orange colour, while the black side steps are said to have been inspired by a shark's fin. The interior has also been treated to an update, with the leather seats also featuring orange accented panelling.

Limited to 250 units, each truck has been given an individual number, displayed via stitching on the headrests. Unique SVP logos are embossed into the mats, too.

Underneath the bonnet sits a 2.4-litre turbocharged diesel engine, which can be controlled via Mitsubishi's Super Select system, allowing the driver to easily switch between two- and four-wheel drive through a rotary controller. This can be changed at speeds of up to 62mph on all surfaces. There's a choice of six-speed manual or five-speed automatic gearbox.

The SVP II comes with a comprehensive list of standard equipment, including a full infotainment system with touchscreen display, as well as Apple CarPlay and Android Auto smartphone connectivity software. Other features include keyless entry, Bluetooth connectivity and bi-xenon headlights.

The Mitsubishi L200 Barbarian SVP II can be ordered now, with first deliveries expected in May. Prices start at £29,830.

How great is the Hilux? Ask a farmer, builder, fencer . . .



If you want to know just how reliable, hard-wearing and capable a machine the Toyota Hilux is, you can't do better than ask the people who drive them day-in, day-out. That's what makes Hilux's latest award, Professional Pick-Up and 4x4 magazine's Working Pick-Up of the Year, announced, all the more relevant and rewarding.

Unlike many other awards, these honours are determined by people who rely on their pick-ups and all-wheel drive machines every day for their business. A more rigorous and practical judging panel would be hard to find, representing a wide range of professions and jobs including farming, fencing, plant hire, builders, road gritters, estate managers, agricultural suppliers and a professional hunter.

Hilux had to prove its mettle in a series of driving scenarios, including driving off-road and towing, in a test programme at the Carlton Towers Estate in Yorkshire.

Speaking for the team of 12 judges, Liam Campbell, Professional Pick-Up and 4x4 founder and editor, said: "The Hilux has long been regarded as the no nonsense workhorse, and this continues into the latest generation with its fantastic residual values, a 3.5-tonne towing capacity and its highly regarded build quality and durability. However, it didn't just impress in terms of productivity and capabilities; the jury also made a note of its comfortable ride and handling on the road."

James Clark, Toyota press relations manager, said: "Hilux couldn't hope for a better commendation than to be named the best in its class from the people whose livelihoods depend on a vehicle they can rely on to do the job, every time. With each new generation of Hilux we have made advances in performance, comfort and safety, but never at the cost of its fundamental abilities as a tough, robust machine that can tackle the toughest working conditions."



Corsa GSi returning after 25 year-hiatus

By Anthony Martyn

After a quarter-century in the British market, Vauxhall's evergreen Corsa will return in GSi guise this year, reinforcing the 'performance through dynamics' theme adopted by the recently launched Insignia GSi.

Available to order later this year, the Corsa GSi will take the key chassis and design elements from the current Corsa VXR model to create an agile and purposeful driver's car, but with all the space and efficiency of the regular model.

The Corsa GSi uses the sporty three-door body, with a raft of exterior design cues to set it apart from the regular car.

Large air intakes and a honeycomb grille dominate the front of the car, while deep sill extensions and carbon-trimmed features adorn its flanks. At the rear, a deep rear spoiler not only defines the GSi aesthetically, but also provides downforce to hunker down the rear suspension at higher speeds.

A chrome tailpipe completes the look. Inside, leather Recaro seats allow drivers to sit low in the car, and close to the action. A leather sports steering wheel and aluminium pedals continue the GSi theme.

And as with most other Corsas, the GSi comes with Vauxhall's IntelliLink infotainment system, offering Apple CarPlay and Android Auto connectivity.



A chrome tailpipe completes the look

Riding on 18-inch alloy wheels, the Corsa GSi takes its suspension and brakes – with red-painted calipers – from the current 210PS Corsa VXR. The firmer springs and competition-tuned dampers offer tight control of the body at high speeds, and exceptional levels of grip in wet and dry conditions.

More information about the new Corsa GSi will be available later in the year when order books open.

1993 Corsa GSi 1.6 16v

While the earlier 1983-1993 Vauxhall Nova spawned a 1.6 GTE performance model, it wasn't until the launch of the original Corsa in 1993 that the GSi moniker was used – but only for a very short period. Powered by a 16-valve, double-overhead cam 1.6-litre petrol engine producing 105bhp at 6,000rpm, the GSi would sprint to 60mph in 9.2 seconds, and on to a 121mph top speed.

A five-speed gearbox, firmer suspension, bigger brakes and wider tyres turned the little Corsa into one of the very first 'pocket rockets'.



The original Corsa GSi 1.6 16v



The GSi uses the sporty three-door body with a raft of exterior design cues to set it apart from the regular Corsa

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Funky new Kona spices up market

By Aidan Rennie-Jones

It might feel like just about every car manufacturer is entering the battle for sales in the fiercely fought B-segment SUV sector – and you'd be right.

Not a day seems to pass without another car firm announcing their entrant to the market. Late last year Hyundai – launched the Kona, complete with funky styling and ever so slightly-too-bright paint shades.

The Kona is an entirely new model for the brand and is built on a bespoke platform. Starting at just £16,195, it comes packed with kit and clever technology, such as autonomous city braking.

All models get full LED twin headlamps, two-tone roof and the choice of 10 loud colours. What's more, the SUV is a true four wheel drive so should be able to cope with the od bump up kerbs outside schools, while it's the first Hyundai to get Display Audio, a new seven inch touchscreen multimedia system with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto.

Buyers can choose between two petrol models which include a buzzy three-cylinder 1.0-litre with 118bhp or a 1.6 GDi four-cylinder with 128bhp. Both are frugal, but if you're after performance the 1.6 makes more sense, cracking 60mph in 7.5 seconds, and it's the one we'd recommend. It returns 42mpg and emits 153g/km of CO₂. Surprisingly, Hyundai are launching the Kona without a diesel option – this will come next year with two power outputs: 113bhp and 134bhp.

Overall we found the Kona couldn't hide its SUV roots, dipping and wallowing in bends. The steering was a little vague and you'd never really be able to describe it as a driver's car. However, we liked the slick,



There are 334-litres of boot space

manual six-speed gearbox – it's our preferred choice over the clumsy seven-speed auto – and the 1.6-litre GDi felt plenty powerful enough on the twisty stuff. The suspension felt a little hard at times, though, crashing and banging over even small bumps – a particular disappointment for an SUV. Our off-roading was limited to some dusty tracks, so we can't vouch for its credentials, however it does feature locking differentials and hill-descent control.

Even the boss of Hyundai UK admits the Kona won't be to everyone's tastes.

However, we like it. We think it certainly stands out from the crowd – vitally important in this segment – and despite a fussy rear end, its chunky proportions and bold look are definitely loveable.

Hyundai wants the Kona to be considered as a serious SUV and not just a generic crossover so that means the styling includes lots of bold black plastics and a raised profile



We like it. We think it certainly stands out from the crowd

that not only adds ground clearance, but also road presence.

Inside, the Kona is just as interesting. You get colour co-ordinated seatbelts that match the garish exterior paint colours, there's body colour piping on the seats and matching accents on the air vents and dash. Sadly the infotainment system lets things down, it's clunky to use and froze during our test. We liked the heated and cooled leather seats (optional and included on the highest trim), and the build quality was impressive. There is ample legroom in the front and a modest amount in the rear, although three passengers

would be pushing your luck. It has 334-litres of boot space with the seats up and 1,116 with them down.

The Kona range starts with the base "S" model, which includes an impressive amount of kit, such as cruise control, LED daytime lights, all-round electric windows, a five-inch LCD infotainment screen, a DAB radio with Auxiliary and USB connectivity, as well as Bluetooth and heated electric door mirrors. Our car was a top-spec Premium GT and boasted a full leather interior with heated and cooled seats, autonomous emergency braking, LED taillights, LED headlamps with

high beam assist, and four-wheel-drive.

The Hyundai Kona is a practical car that will appeal to drivers who want to stand out from the crowd. With individual looks and plenty of kit thrown in as standard, it offers a tempting alternative to the sea of SUVs that are currently swamping the market. At £24,995 for the top spec model, it's a little more expensive than some rivals, however we'd argue the extra kit you get thrown in, and the five year warranty, certainly make it worth the extra.

● Model as tested: Premium GT 1.6 T-GDi 177PS 7 speed DCT 4WD. Price: £24,995



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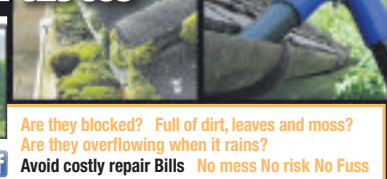


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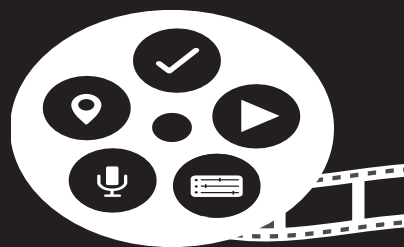
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Setting the standard for a bright future ahead

CHAIRMAN Trevor Thomas believes Cradley Town have taken the first step on the road to a bright future after being awarded Charter Standard Status by the FA.

Seen as the first step of a five-year plan to transform the West Midlands Premier club's fortunes, it follows months of hard work by Thomas and his committee.

Future plans include a redevelopment of its Beeches View Avenue home, while continuing to grow the club's new academy.

Thomas, who has been at helm for 25 years, said: "This is massive for us, the first step in what promises to be a long journey."

"I'm excited about the future. I want the

club to become a trademark for success." Central to the club's plans is the academy, which launched this season and is currently based at Tividale's Ormiston School. Thomas's long-term hope is for it to be housed at Beeches View. The immediate aim is for the academy to gain FA youth club status.

Cradley are also targeting an improvement at first-team level with Thomas hopeful they can climb 'one or two' levels. The Hammers expect to name a new permanent manager by the end of the month.

Richard Forsyth is in temporary charge until the end of the season, following Andy Wytton's resignation last month.

City court Key for former champion's Classic return

US OPEN finalist Madison Keys will join British No.1 Johanna Konta for this year's Birmingham Classic at the Edgbaston Priory Club.

The 23-year-old American, who lost her first Grand Slam final to compatriot Sloane Stephens last year, won the Birmingham Classic tournament in 2016.

She will face stern competition to regain her crown with two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitová and reigning Wimbledon champion Garbiñe Muguruza also set to compete.

Keys missed last year's tournament through injury, and is keen on making a

comeback at this year's event, which will be played from June 18-24.

"I feel like I've played some of my best tennis on grass and I have really fond memories of winning in Birmingham two years ago," said Keys.

"It was a really big result for me at the time and although a lot has happened since then, including making my first Grand Slam final last year, I took a lot from that week."

"I was really sad not to be able to play in Birmingham last year and defend that title so it makes me really happy to be able to come back and play there again."

Same school, now players are sharing same goals



Aiden Stone



Adam Legzdins

MOST schools would be pleased to produce one professional footballer from their ranks – but one Staffordshire school has produced two, both playing in the same position... and at the same Premier League club.

Former scholars at Wolgarston High School, Penkridge, Aiden Stone and Adam Legzdins are goalkeepers at Burnley.

Stone, who hails from Hednesford, is making his way in the game after being spotted playing for Brocton as a 17-year-old in Midland League Division One.

Now a year older, he is building his reputation with the Turf Moor club's under-23s – and has been given a taste of first-team involvement after being included in Sean Dyche's senior squad for the trip to Anfield earlier this season. He was also in the squad for a League Cup tie at Leeds.

Legzdins, meanwhile, has been there and done it at the age of 31 in a career which saw him join Birmingham City 13 years ago before a series of loans to non-league clubs, followed by stints at Oldham and Crewe before joining Burton Albion, Derby County and Leyton Orient, eventually returning to Blues as a back-up keeper to Tomasz Kuszczak.

Unreal

He joined Burnley last year and the two work closely together behind current No.1 Nick Pope, injured first choice shot-stopper Tom Heaton and former Manchester United and Albion stopper Anders Lindegaard.

Stone said of the past 12 months. "It's been unreal. It's been intense because I've gone from training once a week and playing a game on a Saturday at Brocton to training every day."

"It is hard work but you have got to work hard if you want to be a professional and I want this to be my career."

Former Blues glovesman Legzdins was born in Penkridge and the duo attended the same school. He is tipping Stone to have a long career in the game.

"My best friend is the head of PE at Wolgarston. He asked me to go in and put on a session for the goalkeepers so that is the first time we met," Legzdins added. "I could tell he had potential straight away."

Stone now faces a huge couple of months. Out of contract in the summer, he aims to win a new deal at Turf Moor, then gain some first-team experience by going out on loan.

Basketball club realising all its hoops and dreams



The 99ers' growth has been staggering

A BASKETBALL team is jumping through hoops following a stunning year of growth.

Walsall 99ers, formed just over 12 months ago with the aim of developing the sport in the area, have been staggered by their success.

Around five people originally signed up, but now the 99ers have more than 300 players on their books from the age of five up to seniors.

A host of training sessions take place across four days at the Bloxwich Active Living Centre with the club keen to further extend their playing numbers.

Managing director Alan Caron is delighted with how the club has progressed over the past year and hopes they can continue improving and developing.

He said: "We formed about 12 months ago and we became one of the first basketball teams in the region."

"At first, there was only a few players turning up for training and games whereas now, we have over 300 people on our books – it's excellent."

Response

"Walsall is an untapped area for basketball and the response has been fantastic."

"I consider it a massive achievement for ourselves. I think Walsall has a secret admiration for basketball, it's brilliant."

"It's now about us growing the sport further and going into schools to help promote the club and let people know we are out there."

The Walsall 99ers doesn't just feature basketball, but a range of different sports covering all ages. The club also hosts walking football, dodgeball, handball, walking basketball and wheelchair basketball which brings a community feel to the area.

The 99ers' first team and development squad both play in the same division in the Youth Basketball League. The development squad currently acts as a second team which features a host of youngsters around the age of 17, and players who have a pure love for the sport.

With two games left to play, against West Bromwich Basketball Club and Walsall Warriors II, the develop-

SPORTING FEATURE

By Lewis Richards

"At first, there was only a few players turning up for training and games. Now, we have over 300 people on our books."

ment side was still in the hunt for glory, hoping to cement a play-off spot as the business end of the season draws near.

"We have a vital games coming up," said Caron. "It would be a great achievement if we managed to do get into the play-off finals."

The 99ers also have high hopes to introduce more teams across the domestic leagues, with the possibility of adding an under-19s squad to the mix go along with their already impressive youth system, which includes sides from under-11 up to under-17.

The long-term aim would be to see the under-19s move out of the academy set-up and into the first-team leagues to support both of their successful development and senior squads.

"It's been great to see over the season a number of players develop within the pathway programme," added Caron.

"The under-17s have been playing up in the senior programme and playing key roles in the games."

The club holds various training sessions at the Bloxwich Active Living Centre, High Street, Bloxwich on Monday, Wednesday and Friday evenings and also runs a Saturday club at the same venue.

Anyone wishing to join the club or attend one of the sessions should contact Alan Caron on 07879 861011.

Further details can be found on the club's website at www.walsall99ers.com or on Twitter @walsall99ers.

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Three boxers take belts but blood is shed

BLOODSHED cut short the final bout of Saturday night as three new champions were crowned on BCB Promotions' big show at Genting Arena in Birmingham.

Wolverhampton's Kyle Williams and Brummies Andrew Robinson and Kash Ali all had belts strapped to their waists. But there would be no winner declared between Shropshire's Craig Morris and Andy Keates, from Leek in Staffordshire, which ended a technical draw.

Morris, defending his IBO Continental welterweight title, was cut by the right eye in an accidental third round clash of heads. The ringside doctor ruled the wound so severe for him not to continue.

Williams, aged 26, of Whitmore Reans, made co-challenger Jordan Turner quit at the end of the seventh to become Midlands bantamweight boss.

Robinson hadn't lost with any of the judges when the scores were tallied after his 10-round with Nicky Jenman for the IBO Continental middleweight title.

A peach of a second round punch rocked Sheffield veteran Dave Howe and saw Ali take the Central heavyweight title while West Bromwich's Tommy Loach and Brierley Hill based opponent MJ Hall recorded a draw over four rounds.

There were four-round points successes for Coseley's Tommy Ghent at welter over Lithuanian Arvydas Trizno; for Oldbury cruiser Matt Sen against debutant Kevin Williams; for Brummie Mussab Abubaker at super welter at the expense of Paul Cummings and Shakan Pitters, at cruiser, who beat Elvis Dube.

Runners gorge on Ironbridge success

AFTER weather related cancellations and postponements curtailed the options available for athletes from Dudley Kingswinford Running club it was more feast than famine at the weekend.

The largest group travelled to Telford for the Ironbridge Half Marathon - and DK were able to take away some age group prizes. Dave Norman was first home in 1.28.25 in 312st place taking third M45, Mark Homer was 53rd in 1.22.55 claiming first M55, Simon Hughes was only a place behind in 1.34.03 and Helen Tromans claimed second F45 in 67th place in 1.35.20.

Also among the prizes was Steve Holdcroft who travelled towards the Welsh borders to take part in the rearranged Mortimer Forest Trail Race. He took fourth place in 63.27. Also off road, Tim Rowe and Martyn Cant took part in the Lilleshall Monumental 10k in 85th in 55.25 and 206th place in 1.16.34 respectively.

Malcolm Beddall, Lisa Kendrick, Karen Flint and Jan Burbie travelled to the Cotswolds for the Gloucester 20.

Finally Dave Ede travelled to Italy for the Stramilano Half Marathon finishing in 3067th place in 1.49.52.

Lord's triumph for Hagley cricketers



The victorious Hagley indoor team

HAGLEY Cricket Club have won the National Indoor Championship at Lord's, coming top out of 1,200 teams - a great achievement for a village team.

This finished off an amazing run of form dating back to January 2017 as following an unbeaten winter season they were crowned league champions and progressed to a four-team Worcestershire finals event last spring.

Victory in this gave Hagley the title of Worcestershire champions and qualified them into the regional play-off against the Staffordshire winners. Hagley came up against Sneyd at their home hall in Newcastle-under-Lyme but chasing 102 the home side fell a few runs short to send Hagley to the regional finals at Edgbaston.

In their first game Hagley faced Poulton and, with long standing

indoor captain Paul Morgan unavailable, Joe Lennon led the side and Hagley progressed comfortably for the loss of just two wickets. In the regional final Hagley took firm control restricting Welsh side Haverfordwest to just 98 to send Hagley to Lord's.

After victory over Woodlands from Yorkshire, Hagley took on Broadstairs from Kent and won by one wicket.

Glassboys 'can finish with flourish'

GLASSBOYS are back on track as a last-gasp winner finally went in their favour. An own goal in injury time at Amblecote on Monday night served up a 2-1 victory over Sutton Coldfield Town.

Wolves loanee gave Stourbridge the lead on 29 minutes before former Stour forward Karl Hawley put Sutton back level. Then Luke Shearer's cross was turned in by Sutton defender Lee Smith to take all the points.

Stourbridge are aiming to finish with a flourish after a 4-1 win at promotion-chasers Farsley Celtic.

The Glassboys had to do it the hard way in Yorkshire, recovering after trailing to a controversial early Ryan Watson penalty thanks to a brace from Luke Benbow, and goals from Paul McCone and substitute Josh Cooke.

It ended a four-game winless run and boss Gary Hackett said: "I felt our recent performances had been good after bringing in a few new faces. It takes time to gel but the new recruits have been a breath of fresh air around the place and we gained our rewards from an all-round good performance. It has been a tough season on and off the pitch, I have made mistakes with certain players that haven't worked out but I stand by the opinion that we can finish strongly."

John Hill did not get the result he wanted in his 250th league game in charge at Halesowen Town. But the boss saw character in a 2-0 defeat to Evo-Stik Premier leaders Altrincham to provide encouragement ahead of Saturday's No9 derby at The Grove.

Rutter's ready to go full throttle again

BRIERLEY Hill-born racer Michael Rutter has eyes on the opening British Superbike round this weekend after enjoying his first test session at Castle Combe, Wiltshire. It was his first proper outing on a bike since before Christmas.

The 45-year-old, who also enjoyed a final testing session at Donington Park, is back competing in the National Superstock 1000 series this year, having finished third in the 2017 standings.

He will also be back racing on the roads at the North West 200 in Northern Ireland, in May, the Isle of Man TT in May and June, and the Classic TT in August and September.

STEF'S ON BALL FOR DK TREBLE

Moseley Old Oak 19 DK 42

FOR both teams this was their first game in March. However, despite lost match sharpness produced an entertaining game.

It was a fine advert for Midlands One West with nine tries being scored.

The opening 10 minutes saw DK start to apply pressure through their phase play and they were certainly growing in confidence. However, the first score went to Moseley and the try was converted.

On 19 minutes the scores were level, Matt and Perks and Connah Jones combining to put Stef Shillingford through and Sam Vaughan converted.

With both sides trying to gain the ascendancy DK were the next to score, Luke Greenwood's effort converted by Vaughan.

DK began to assert themselves onto the game, though their third try owed a lot to the front row in particular and the pack. Shillingford going over for his second try and Vaughan again adding the extras.

Control

DK led 21-7 at the break, but it was Oak who seemed to draw the most from the interval, scoring two tries in the first 15 minutes, one converted, so it was game on at 21-19.

From the ensuing kick-off DK were able to re-establish an element of control and the next score, the bonus point score, came from second row Matt Perks, following good work by Jordan Brookes and Shillingford.

DK continued to control field position and the next try came from scrum half Jordan Brookes. Vaughan's trusty boot added two more points to the tally.

Shillingford intercepted a pass to run in the final score and complete his hat-trick and Vaughan completed the scoring.

On Saturday, DK are at Melbourne.

Baker in home corner at Venue



Kane Baker is back on the bill The Venue, Dudley, on April 7

KANE Baker feels like he's coming 'home' as an improved fighter ahead of his return to action at the Venue in Dudley next month.

Fight night is on April 7 with Baker, Midlands champion Tyler Denny, Kane Baker, Les Byfield, Ryan 'Stewart' Davies, Danny Ball and Humza Ali all occupying the home corner.

Baker featured on the last Venue show on June 9 last year, outpointing Danny Little. The game Brummie welterweight, from Bartley Green, has since lost three of four pro contests,

but all away from home against quality opposition, including Conor Benn. The 27-year-old is now looking for his sixth win in nine contests at the Venue, before tackling highly-rated puncher Sam Maxwell in Belfast on April 21.

Baker said: "The Venue is like home to me. I'm looking forward to going back."

Tickets are £35 or £50 ringside with waitress service. Call 07976 283157 or contact Kane on 07950 933880 or via Facebook.



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